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THE CASE OF THE HUNTED MAN

SUPER DETECTIVE LIBRARY.—No. 40.—THE CASE OF THE HUNTED MAN

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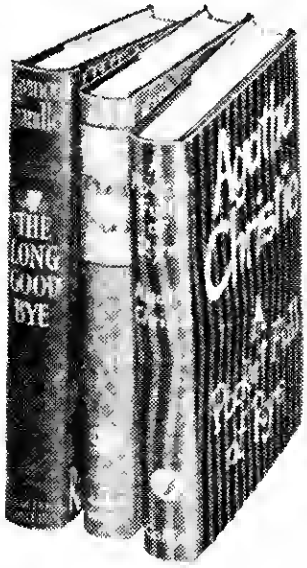

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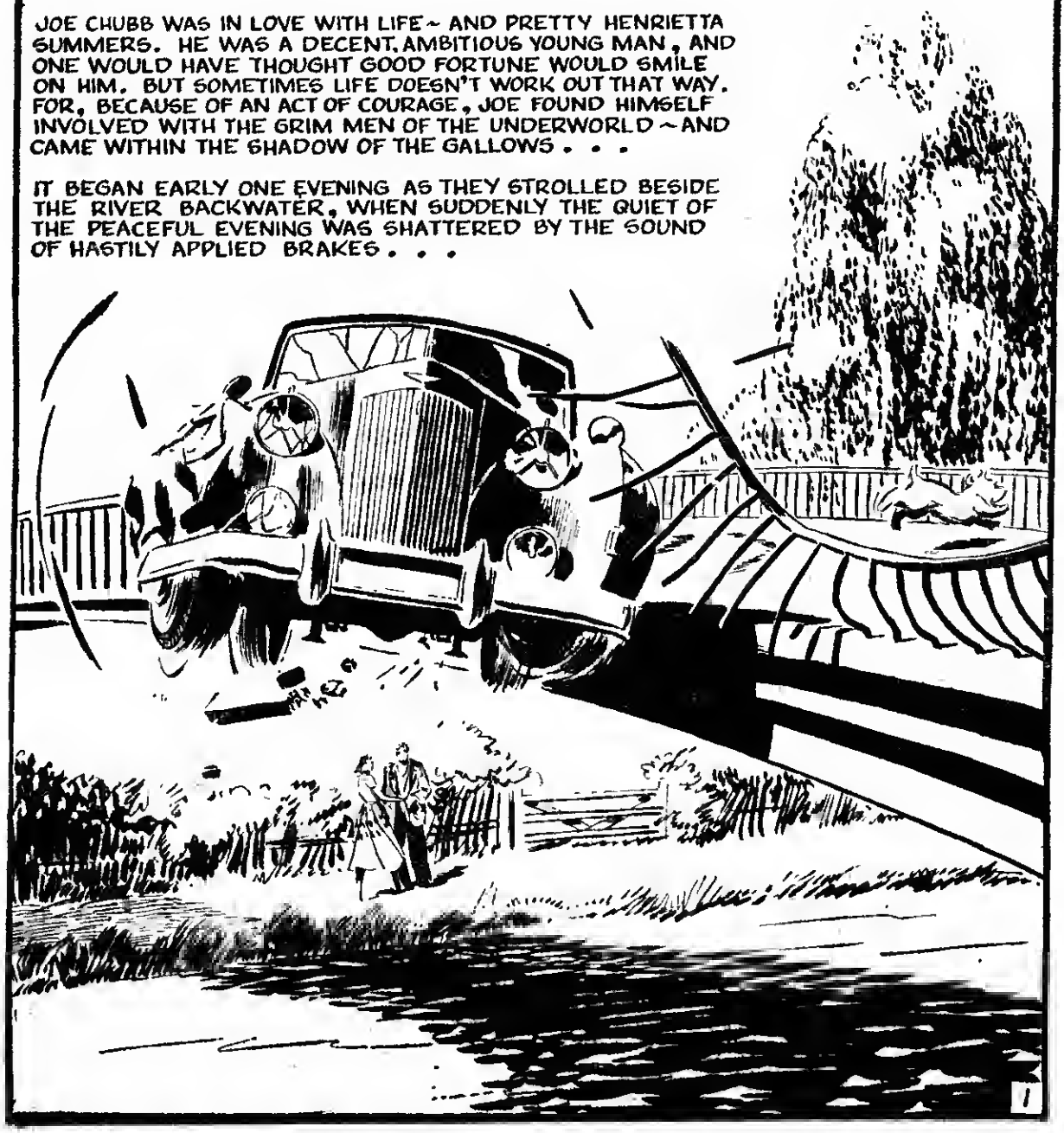
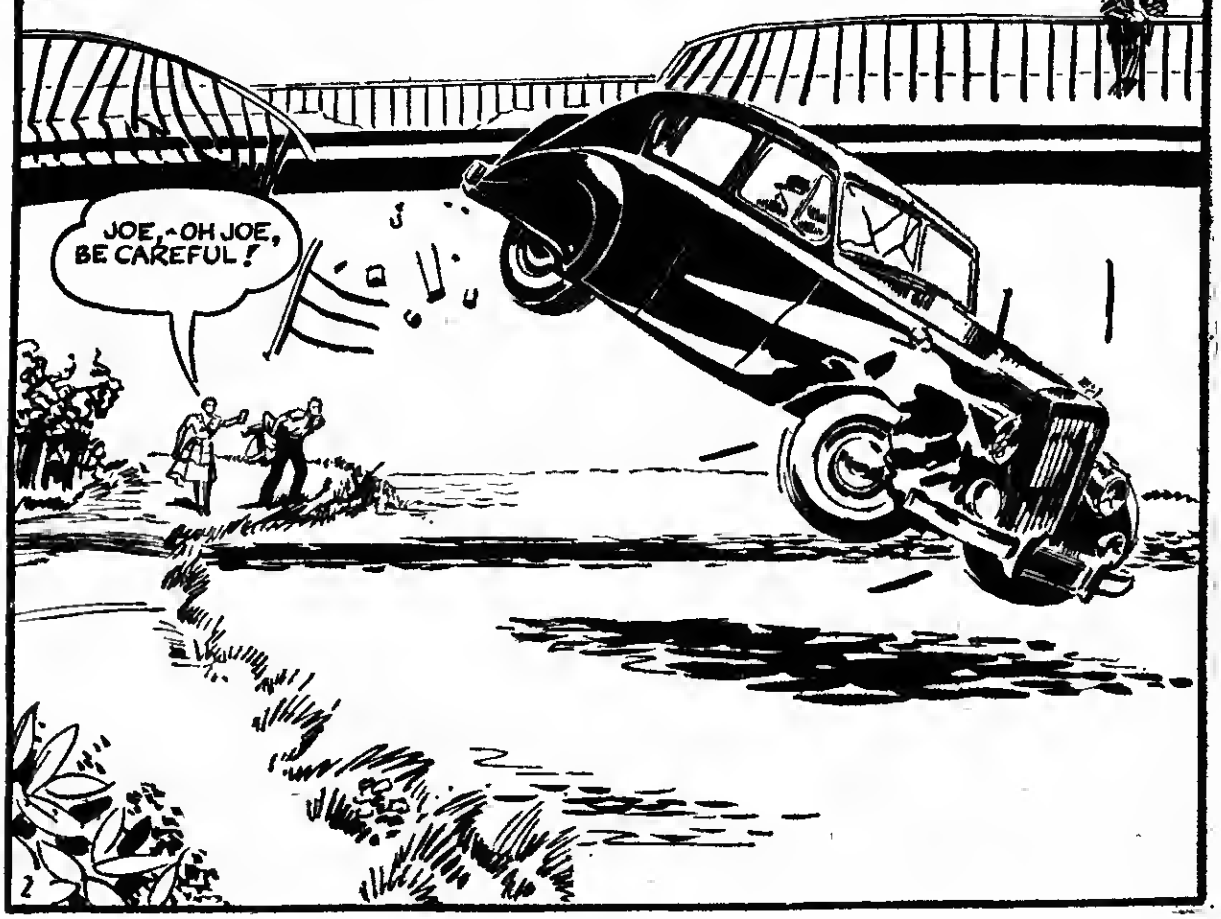
THE CASE OF THE HUNTED MAN

JOE CHUBB WAS IN LOVE WITH LIFE ~ AND PRETTY HENRIETTA SUMMERS. HE WAS A DECENT, AMBITIOUS YOUNG MAN, AND ONE WOULD HAVE THOUGHT GOOD FORTUNE WOULD SMILE ON HIM. BUT SOMETIMES LIFE DOESN'T WORK OUT THAT WAY. FOR, BECAUSE OF AN ACT OF COURAGE, JOE FOUND HIMSELF INVOLVED WITH THE GRIM MEN OF THE UNDERWORLD ~ AND CAME WITHIN THE SHADOW OF THE GALLOWS . . .

IT BEGAN EARLY ONE EVENING AS THEY STROLLED BESIDE THE RIVER BACKWATER, WHEN SUDDENLY THE QUIET OF THE PEACEFUL EVENING WAS SHATTERED BY THE SOUND OF HASTILY APPLIED BRAKES . . .



JOE GASPED. THE SPEEDING CAR HAD LURCHED SICKENINGLY, ITS TYRES SCREAMING. THEY CAUGHT A SWIFT GLIMPSE OF THE DRIVER FIGHTING DESPERATELY TO STRAIGHTEN THE CAR. THEN THERE CAME THE HARSH TEARING OF METAL BITING INTO METAL, OF GLASS SHATTERING, AND THE CAR PLUNGED DOWN INTO THE RIVER. FOR A MOMENT JOE STOOD STUNNED, AND THEN HE TORE OFF HIS JACKET.



BUT JOE HAD NOT HEARD. HIS THOUGHTS WERE ONLY OF THE DRIVER IMPRISONED IN THE CAR.
TREMBLING, HENRIETTA RAN TO THE OTHER WITNESS OF THE ACCIDENT. HE CAME SLOWLY TOWARDS HER. A GRIN TWISTING HIS UNPLEASANT FACE.
QUICK! YOU MUST HELP JOE!
NOT LIKELY! THAT DRIVER'S 'AD IT. DIDN'T STAND A DOG'S CHANCE. PITY ABOUT THE CAR, THOUGH. MUST BE WORTH ALL OF A THOUSAND NICKER!
HENRIETTA STARED AT HIM IN MINGLED HORROR AND DISGUST. MEANWHILE, JOE HAD FOUGHT HIS WAY TO THE CAR, HALF BURIED IN THE MUD. THE DRIVER WAS HUDDLED UNCONSCIOUS OVER THE STEERING WHEEL. DESPERATELY, JOE STRUGGLED TO OPEN THE CAR DOOR. HE KNEW THERE WASN'T A SECOND TO WASTE. ALREADY A RED MIST WAS SWIRLING BEFORE HIS EYES.
HIS LUNGS FELT AS THOUGH THEY WERE BURSTING, AND HIS FINGERS WERE CLUMSY, NUMBED, SEEMED SAPPED OF ALL STRENGTH. . .FEAR SEIZED HIM. IF ONLY THE OTHER WITNESS TO THE CRASH HAD DIVED IN TO ASSIST HIM, BUT ~ ~

IT WAS NOT UNTIL THE HARD-EYED STRANGER SAW THAT JOE HAD SUCCEEDED IN RESCUING THE DRIVER THAT HE OFFERED TO HELP.
HANG ON A MINUTE, MISTER. I'LL GIVE YOU A 'AND.
OH, JOE! THANK GOODNESS YOU'RE SAFE!

BUT FOR ALL THE HELP THAT THE STRANGER GAVE, HE MIGHT JUST AS WELL NOT HAVE BEEN THERE. AND IT WAS JOE, HIS CHEST HEAVING, WHO HAULED THE UNCONSCIOUS DRIVER ON TO THE BANK . .

. . WHERE HE LAY STILL. HE WAS AN OLD MAN, WITH GREYING HAIR AND A DEEPLY LINED FACE. JOE EXAMINED HIM HASTILY. APART FROM A FEW BRUISES THERE SEEMED TO BE NO EXTERNAL INJURIES, SO HE BEGAN TO GIVE HIM ARTIFICIAL RESPIRATION. AT LONG LAST THE DRIVER'S EYES FLICKERED OPEN AND HE GAVE A LONG SIGH . .
PHEW! THAT WAS CLOSE! BUT I THINK HE'S GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT NOW. BUT WE'LL HAVE TO GET HIM HOME QUICKLY.

LUCKILY, HENRIETTA FOUND A PASSING TAXI. SHE RETURNED WITH THE DRIVER TO FIND THAT THE STRANGER WAS TAKING ALL THE CREDIT FOR THE RESCUE . . .
I . . . DON'T KNOW HOW TO THANK YOU . .
A PROPER JOB WE HAD GETTING YOU OUT!

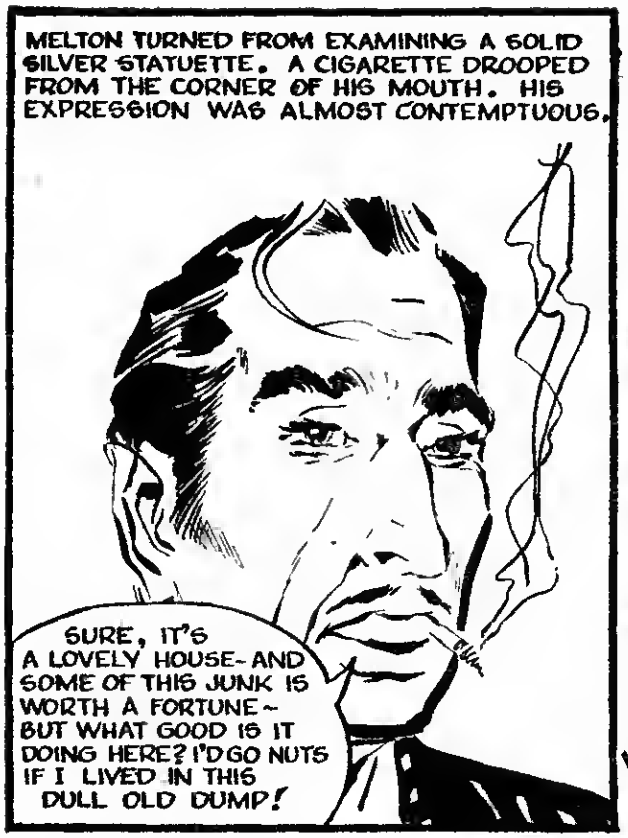
HENRIETTA'S EYES FLASHED INDIGNANTLY. HOT, ANGRY WORDS SPRANG TO HER LIPS . .
WHY, YOU FRAUD! YOU SCARCELY GOT YOUR FEET WET!
FORGET IT HENRIETTA, WHAT DOES IT MATTER, ANYWAY?

THE OLD MAN'S EYES FLICKERED FROM JOE'S FLUSHED, EMBARRASSED FACE, TO HIS SOAKED, BEDRAGGLED SUIT, THEN TO THE SPIVS, WHICH WAS PERFECTLY DRY! IT WAS OBVIOUS WHO HAD RESCUED HIM.
YOU MUST ALL COME WITH ME TO MY HOUSE. MY NAME, BY THE WAY, IS ROBERT GAIL, AND I LIVE NEARBY.
SURE THING, WE'LL SEE YOU SAFELY HOME, GUV.
THAT'S KIND OF YOU SIR, BUT . . .

ROBERT GAIL INSISTED, HOWEVER. HE LIVED NEARBY AT BACKWATER LODGE, A BEAUTIFUL PLACE IN ITS OWN GROUNDS, AND ONCE THERE, ROBERT GAIL AND JOE CHANGED INTO DRY CLOTHING WHILE HENRIETTA MADE A POT OF TEA. A LITTLE LATER THEY WERE TAKING THEIR EASE BEFORE THE BLAZING FIRE IN THE LUXURIOUS LOUNGE.
BIT OF ALL RIGHT THIS--EH ?

MR. GAIL LIVED ALONE EXCEPT FOR A MANSERVANT, WHO WAS AWAY FOR A FEW DAYS. HE WAS A PLEASANT, KINDLY OLD MAN AND HENRIETTA WAS RELIEVED TO SEE THAT HE APPEARED TO BE LITTLE THE WORSE FOR HIS ACCIDENT. .
MY DEAR YOUNG LADY - YOU ARE AS COMPETENT AS YOUR HUSBAND IS COURAGEOUS!
OH-H-H- WE'RE NOT MARRIED . . .

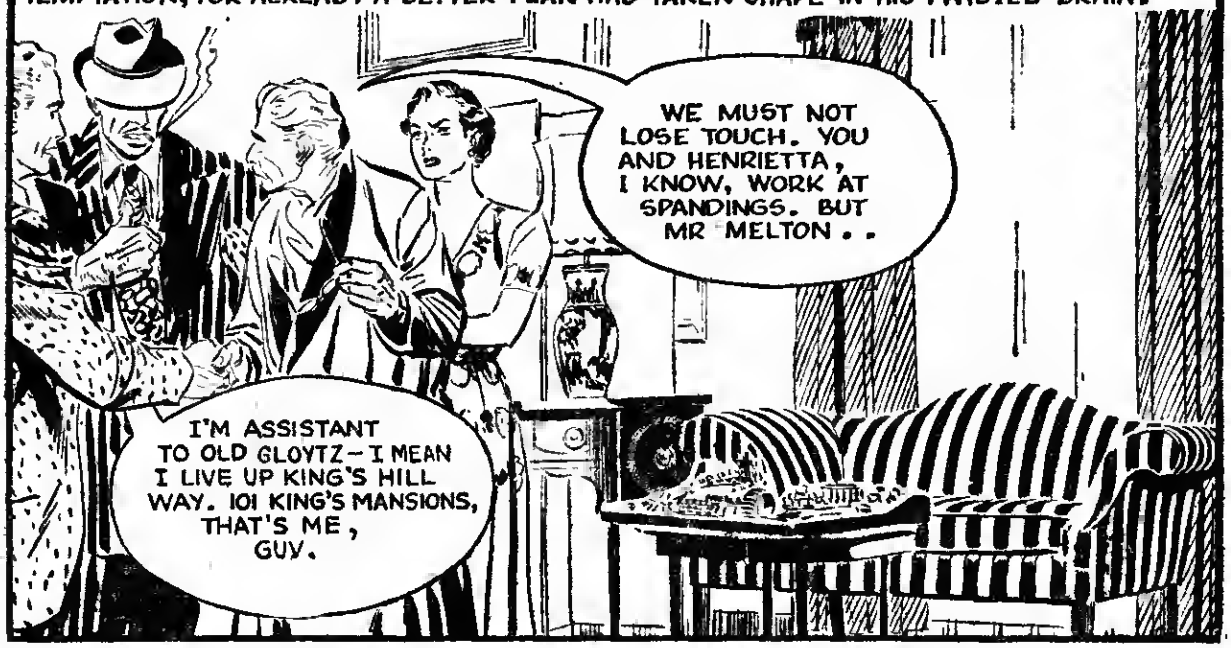
THE OLD GENTLEMAN WAS KEENLY INTERESTED IN THE THREE PEOPLE WHO HAD SO DRAMATICALLY ENTERED HIS LIFE. HE LEARNED THAT JOE WAS A FITTER AT SPANDING'S ENGINEERING WORKS, AND HENRIETTA WAS A TYPIST AT THE SAME FIRM. THE OTHER, WHOSE NAME WAS GARRY MELTON, WAS NOT SO WILLING TO TALK ABOUT HIMSELF, BUT WAS VERY INTERESTED IN ALL HE SAW, JUST THE SAME. . .
COO- SOLID SILVER!
IT'S A LOVELY HOUSE, MR. GAIL. YOU MUST BE VERY HAPPY HERE.


MELTON TURNED FROM EXAMINING A SOLID SILVER STATUETTE. A CIGARETTE DROOPED FROM THE CORNER OF HIS MOUTH. HIS EXPRESSION WAS ALMOST CONTEMPTUOUS.
SURE, IT'S A LOVELY HOUSE- AND SOME OF THIS JUNK IS WORTH A FORTUNE- BUT WHAT GOOD IS IT DOING HERE? I'D GO NUTS IF I LIVED IN THIS DULL OLD DUMP!

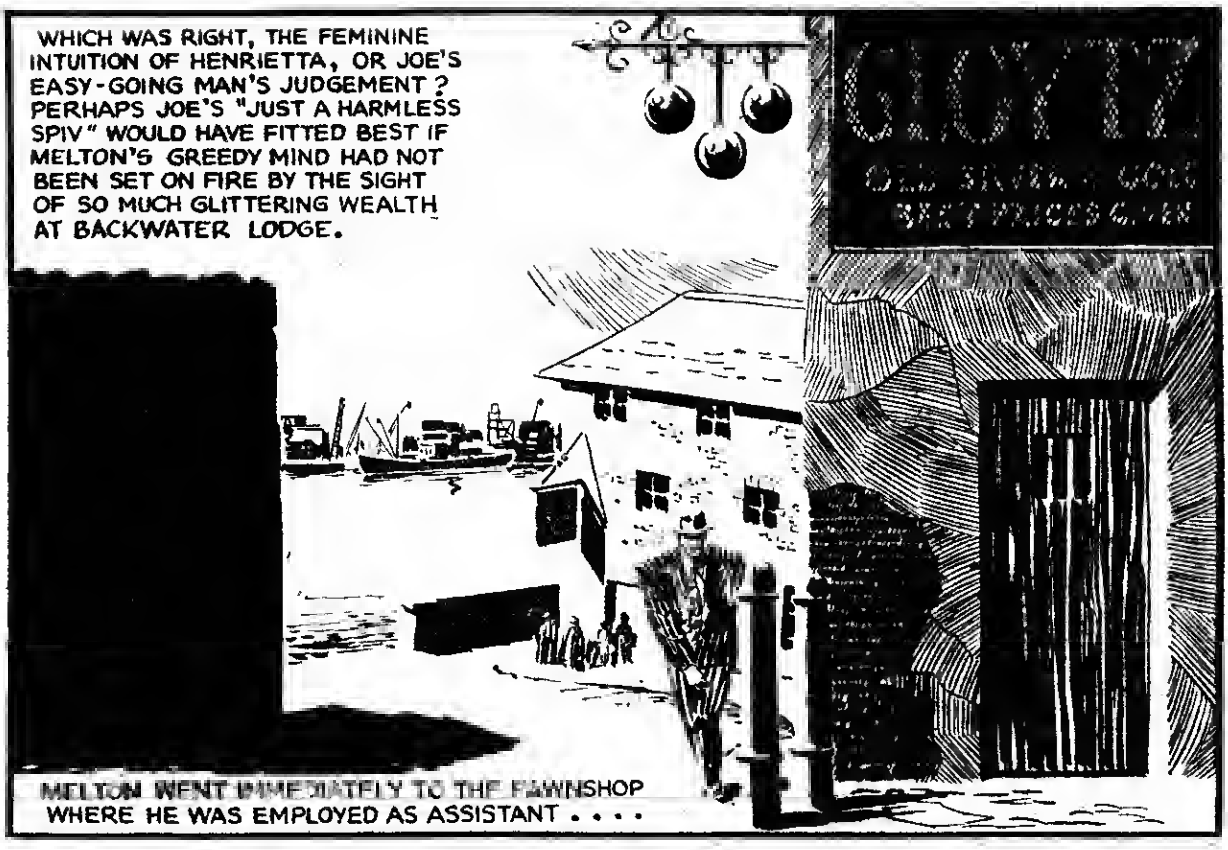
AMUSED BY MELTON'S OPINION, ROBERT GAIL EXPLAINED THAT HE WAS NOT ALTOGETHER IDLE. HE WAS A COLLECTOR OF MEDIEVAL JEWELLERY, AND HIS HOBBY KEPT HIM FULLY OCCUPIED.
THIS INNOCENT LOOKING CABINET IS REALLY A VERY STRONG STEEL SAFE. THERE IS ONLY ONE KEY.

GAIL UNLOCKED THE SAFE, AND AS HE DREW OUT A TRAY OF JEWELLERY THAT GLITTERED AND SPARKLED WITH A THOUSAND COLOURED LIGHTS, MELTON'S EYES BULGED. MR GAIL SPOKE LOVINGLY OF HIS COLLECTION. IT WAS AS WELL FOR HIS PEACE OF MIND, THAT HE WAS UNAWARE OF THE SPIV'S THOUGHTS, AND OF HIS ACQUAINTANCE WITH MEN WHO LURKED IN- LONDON'S UNDERWORLD.
IT IS, I PRIDE MYSELF, ONE OF THE FINEST COLLECTIONS IN THE WORLD.
PHEW! WORTH A FLIPPIN' MILLION! WHAT WOULD OLD GLOYTZ SAY TO THIS LITTLE LOT?
THEY'RE GLORIOUS, MR. GAIL!

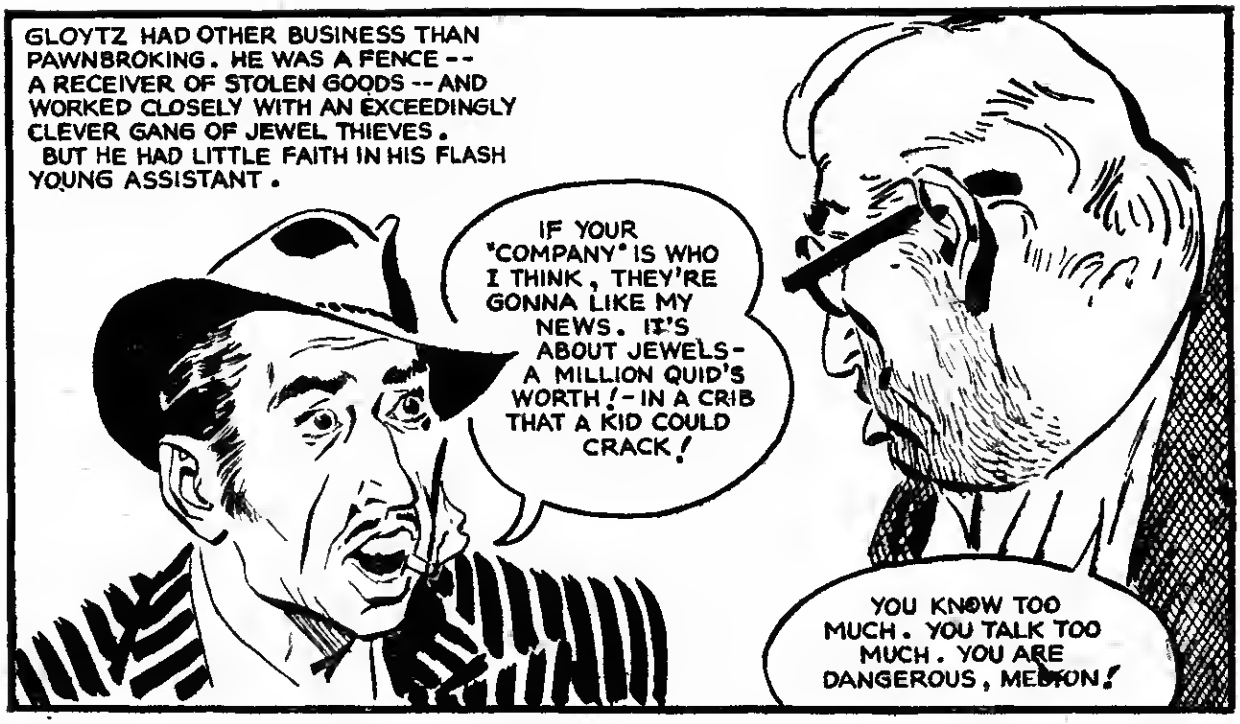
THEY STAYED FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE EVENING, FOR ROBERT GAIL WAS A PLEASANT AND CHARMING HOST. HE SHOWED THEM MANY OF HIS TREASURES.. BUT IT WAS AN EVENING OF TORMENT FOR GARRY MELTON. TIME AND AGAIN HE WAS TEMPTED TO SLIP ONE OF ROBERT GAIL'S SMALLER TREASURES INTO HIS POCKET. BUT HE FOUGHT AGAINST THE TEMPTATION, FOR ALREADY A BETTER PLAN HAD TAKEN SHAPE IN HIS TWISTED BRAIN.



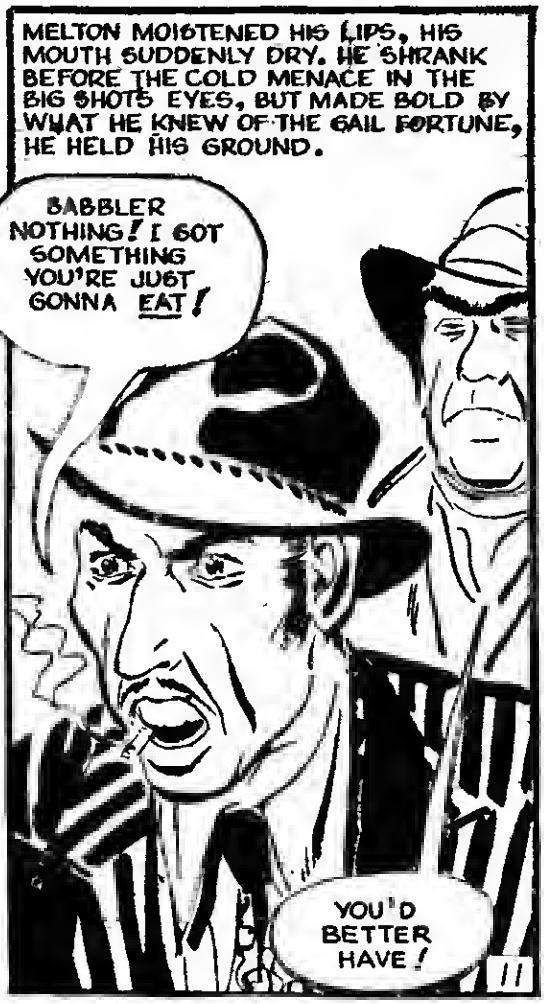
AS MELTON, JOE AND HENRIETTA RETURNED TO TOWN BY THE COUNTRY BUS, THE SPIV TALKED AT GREAT LENGTH OF GAIL'S COLLECTION. IT SEEMED TO HENRIETTA AS THOUGH HE COULD THINK OF NOTHING ELSE, AND HER DISLIKE OF HIM GREW. SHE FELT THAT HE WAS NOT TO BE TRUSTED, AND SHE WONDERED IF ROBERT GAIL HAD BEEN WISE IN SHOWING THEM HIS COLLECTION. HER EYES WERE DARK WITH SUSPICION AS HE BOARDED A BUS—THAT WENT IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION TO KING'S HILL..


WHICH WAS RIGHT, THE FEMININE INTUITION OF HENRIETTA, OR JOE'S EASY-GOING MAN'S JUDGEMENT? PERHAPS JOE'S "JUST A HARMLESS SPIV" WOULD HAVE FITTED BEST IF MELTON'S GREEDY MIND HAD NOT BEEN SET ON FIRE BY THE SIGHT OF SO MUCH GLITTERING WEALTH AT BACKWATER LODGE.
GLOYTZ
MELTON WENT IMMEDIATELY TO THE PAWNSHOP WHERE HE WAS EMPLOYED AS ASSISTANT . . . .

GLOYTZ, THE PAWNBROKER, WAS NOT HOWEVER, PLEASED TO SEE HIM.
MELTON! WHAT DO YOU WANT? I'M EXPECTING COMPANY . . . GO AWAY!
I GOT NEWS, MR. GLOYTZ. IT'S RED HOT --- IT CAN'T WAIT!


GLOYTZ HAD OTHER BUSINESS THAN PAWNBROKING. HE WAS A FENCE -- A RECEIVER OF STOLEN GOODS -- AND WORKED CLOSELY WITH AN EXCEEDINGLY CLEVER GANG OF JEWEL THIEVES. BUT HE HAD LITTLE FAITH IN HIS FLASH YOUNG ASSISTANT.
IF YOUR "COMPANY" IS WHO I THINK, THEY'RE GONNA LIKE MY NEWS. IT'S ABOUT JEWELS - A MILLION QUID'S WORTH! - IN A CRIB THAT A KID COULD CRACK!
YOU KNOW TOO MUCH. YOU TALK TOO MUCH. YOU ARE DANGEROUS, MELTON!

THE WORDS CAME SOFTLY, CONTEMPTUOUSLY. MELTON WAS ABOUT TO PROTEST, WHEN THE DOOR OPENED QUIETLY, AND THREE MEN ENTERED.
COO -- THE BIG SHOT!
WHO IS THIS BABBLER, GLOYTZ?


MELTON MOISTENED HIS LIPS, HIS MOUTH SUDDENLY DRY. HE SHRANK BEFORE THE COLD MENACE IN THE BIG SHOTS EYES, BUT MADE BOLD BY WHAT HE KNEW OF THE GAIL FORTUNE, HE HELD HIS GROUND.
BABBLER NOTHING! I GOT SOMETHING YOU'RE JUST GONNA EAT!
YOU'D BETTER HAVE!

SMOKE CURLED LAZILY CEILINGWARDS FROM THE BIG SHOT'S CIGARETTE AS HE LISTENED TO MELTON'S STORY. SHADOWS SEEMED ETCHED IN THE WALLS, THE ONLY SOUNDS CAME FROM THE TICKING CLOCK - AND MELTON'S HOARSE, EXCITED VOICE. . HE KNEW, TOO, THAT HE WAS FIGHTING FOR HIS LIFE. THE BIG SHOT DEALT SWIFTLY AND SUDDENLY WITH MEN HE CALLED BABBLERS!

IT SOUNDS LIKE A CINCH!

YEAH! WITH SUCKERS LAID ON!

THIS COUPLE WORK AT SPANDINGS YOU SAY? A STRANGE COINCIDENCE, EH, GLOYTZ?

THE BIG SHOT WAS SILENT FOR A MOMENT, AND THEN SLOWLY HE BEGAN TO TALK. . ALREADY A CLEVER AND CRUEL PLAN HAD TAKEN SHAPE IN HIS BRAIN. .

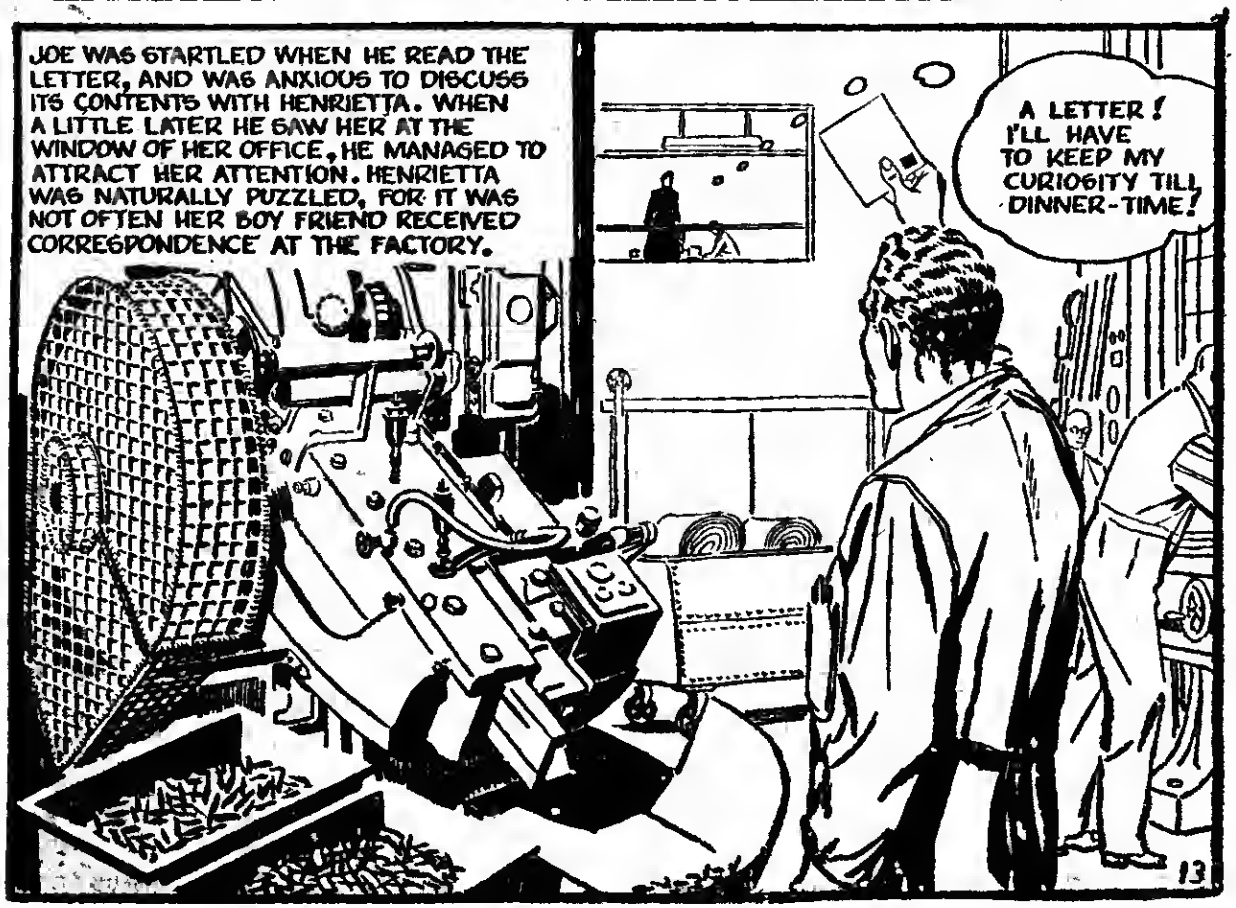
ONLY GLOYTZ HAD ANY DOUBTS ABOUT THE "JOB" . . .

YES, IT SOUNDS EASY. OLD GAIL IS ALONE IN HIS HOUSE WITH A FORTUNE, AND THREE PEOPLE KNOW IT. BUT ONE OF THEM IS MELTON -- MY ASSISTANT. HOWEVER DAMNINGLY WE THROW SUSPICION ON THE OTHER TWO, MELTON WILL BE TRACED HERE. AND THAT'S TOO DANGEROUS TO RISK.

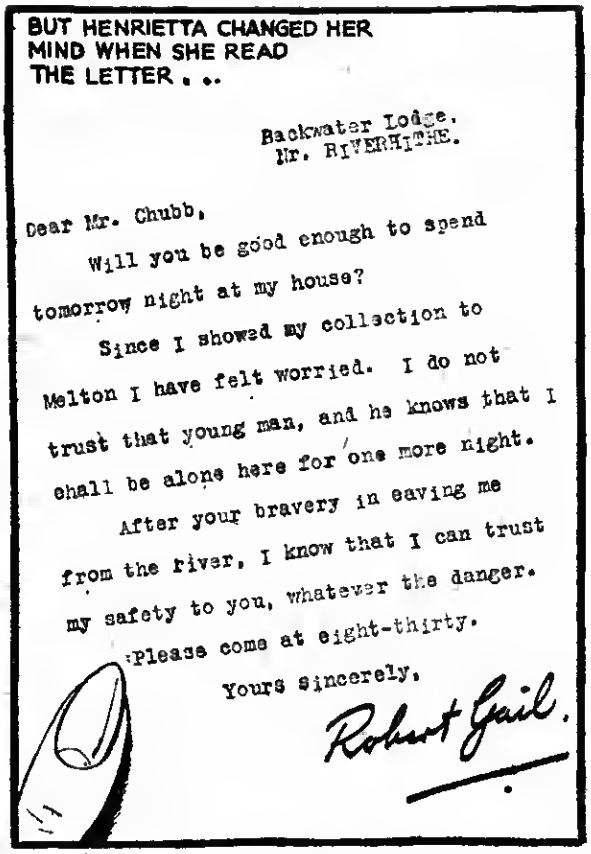
I CAN'T BE TRACED. I GAVE 'EM A PHONY ADDRESS I TELL YOU — THEY'VE ONLY GOT MY NAME AND MY DESCRIPTION.

THEN THE ANSWER IS SIMPLE. MELTON DISAPPEARS AND IT'LL LOOK AS IF HE NEVER EXISTED EXCEPT IN THE IMAGINATIONS OF CHUBB AND THE GIRL! THEY MADE HIM UP TO PUT THE POLICE ON A FALSE SCENT.

AND SO THE FIENDISH PLOT WAS WORKED OUT DOWN TO ITS MINUTEST DETAIL. YET IT WAS SO SIMPLE THAT IT SEEMED AS FOOLPROOF AS -- A GALLOWS!
TWO DAYS LATER A LETTER ARRIVED FOR JOE CHUBB . . .
LETTER FOR YOU, JOE. TYPEWRITTEN, TOO. WHICH OF JOE'S PALS USES A TYPEWRITER?
GUESS WHO, CHAPS!


JOE WAS STARTLED WHEN HE READ THE LETTER, AND WAS ANXIOUS TO DISCUSS ITS CONTENTS WITH HENRIETTA. WHEN A LITTLE LATER HE SAW HER AT THE WINDOW OF HER OFFICE, HE MANAGED TO ATTRACT HER ATTENTION. HENRIETTA WAS NATURALLY PUZZLED, FOR IT WAS NOT OFTEN HER BOY FRIEND RECEIVED CORRESPONDENCE AT THE FACTORY.
A LETTER! I'LL HAVE TO KEEP MY CURIOSITY TILL DINNER-TIME!

AND SO AT DINNER TIME . . .
IT'S FROM MR. GAIL. HE WANTS ME TO SPEND THE NIGHT AT BACKWATER LODGE.
OH - NOT TONIGHT, JOE. WE'RE GOING TO THE PICTURES!


BUT HENRIETTA CHANGED HER MIND WHEN SHE READ THE LETTER . . .
Backwater Lodge.
Mr. RIVERHITHE.
Dear Mr. Chubb,
Will you be good enough to spend tomorrow night at my house?
Since I showed my collection to Melton I have felt worried. I do not trust that young man, and he knows that I shall be alone here for one more night.
After your bravery in saving me from the river, I know that I can trust my safety to you, whatever the danger.
Please come at eight-thirty.
Yours sincerely,
Robert Gail.

HENRIETTA LEANED FORWARD AND HER EXPRESSION WAS CONCERNED. ALTHOUGH SHE HAD KNOWN ROBERT GAIL ONLY A SHORT TIME, SHE FELT A GENUINE AFFECTION FOR THE OLD MAN. .
YOU MUST GO, JOE! I KNEW THAT MELTON IS A BAD LOT, AND MR GAIL REALISED IT, TOO. I'LL GO TO THE ORPHEUS ALONE ~ IT WILL HELP ME TO STOP WORRYING ABOUT YOU BOTH.
ALL RIGHT, I'LL BE A BODYGUARD. BUT PROMISE YOU WILL BE ALONE AT THE PICTURES, HENRIETTA, OR IT'LL BE ME THAT'S WORRIED!
THE TRAP WAS CLEVERLY BAITED . . . .

. . AND THAT EVENING JOE APPROACHED BACKWATER LODGE, UNAWARE THAT HE WAS WATCHED, UNAWARE THAT HE WAS THE CENTRAL FIGURE IN A GRIM AND EVIL PLOT THAT WOULD PUT HIM IN THE SHADOW OF THE GALLOWS . .
HELLO -- THE DOOR'S OPEN. THAT'S FUNNY. .

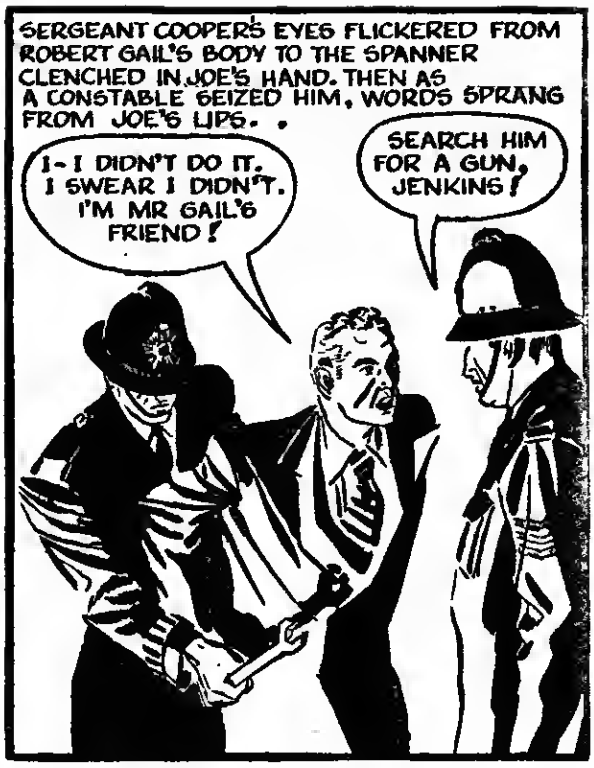
JOE QUICKENED HIS STEP. REACHING THE OPEN DOOR HE CALLED TO MR GAIL. THERE CAME NO ANSWER. HE CALLED AGAIN. SILENCE~A BROODING SILENCE THAT SEEMED TO HANG LIKE AN INVISIBLE CLOUD OVER THE HOUSE. . JOE FELT THE HAIR BEGINNING TO RISE ON THE BACK OF HIS NECK. HIS EYES WATCHFUL AND ALERT, HE ENTERED THE HOUSE, AND THEN AT THE DOOR OF THE LOUNGE HE STOPPED WITH A QUICK INTAKE OF BREATH, HIS EYES WIDE IN SHOCKED HORROR!
MR GAIL!

BUT THE OLD GENTLEMAN WHO LOVED JEWELS DID NOT ANSWER. HE LAY SPRAWLED ON THE THICK PILE CARPET AS THOUGH HE WERE ASLEEP. BUT HE WAS DEAD. . .

SO THE OLD CHAP WAS RIGHT! THAT SWINE, MELTON! AND I AM TOO LATE!
JOE'S FACE PALED AS HE STARED DOWN AT ROBERT GAIL, AND UNTHINKINGLY HE PICKED UP THE SPANNER LYING BESIDE THE BODY.

BUT SUDDENLY HIS BLOOD CHILLED. FOOTSTEPS SOUNDED IN THE HALL. HE GASPED, THINKING THAT THE MURDERER WAS STILL IN THE HOUSE. HE SWUNG ROUND ~ ~

...AND FOUND HIMSELF STARING INTO THE ACCUSING EYES OF A POLICE SERGEANT. .


SERGEANT COOPER'S EYES FLICKERED FROM ROBERT GAIL'S BODY TO THE SPANNER CLENCHED IN JOE'S HAND. THEN AS A CONSTABLE SEIZED HIM, WORDS SPRANG FROM JOE'S LIPS. .
I-I DIDN'T DO IT. I SWEAR I DIDN'T. I'M MR GAIL'S FRIEND!
SEARCH HIM FOR A GUN, JENKINS!

JOE, OF COURSE, HADN'T A GUN. BUT THE CONSTABLE'S SEARCH REVEALED THE LETTER THAT THE YOUNG MECHANIC HAD RECEIVED FROM MR GAIL. JOE'S LIPS TWISTED BITTERLY AS THE POLICE SERGEANT EXAMINED THE LETTER. .
MAYBE YOU'RE SATISFIED NOW. THAT LETTER WILL PROVE I WAS GAIL'S FRIEND. AND WHILE YOU'RE WASTING TIME WITH ME THE MURDERER IS GETTING AWAY. .

BUT POLICE SERGEANT COOPER SHOOK HIS HEAD. HIS EXPRESSION WAS COLD AND FAINTLY CONTEMPTUOUS.
THAT'S NOT ROBERT GAIL'S SIGNATURE. IT'S NOT ON BACKWATER LODGE NOTEPAPER, EITHER. IT LOOKS A CLUMSY FAKE TO ME.

JOE'S BRAIN REELED. HE STARED INCREDULOUSLY AT THE SERGEANT, WHO WAS NOW TELEPHONING FOR THE POLICE DOCTOR AND MORE MEN TO GUARD THE HOUSE. HE STARED ABOUT HIM DAZEDLY. SURELY THIS MUST BE SOME TERRIBLE NIGHTMARE FROM WHICH HE WOULD PRESENTLY AWAKE. THE LETTER A FAKE? HE JUST COULDN'T BELIEVE IT. YET SERGEANT COOPER, WHO KNEW ROBERT GAIL, WAS CONVINCED OF IT. TERROR GRIPPED JOE, FOR UNLESS MELTON COULD BE FOUND, HE KNEW HE WOULD BE CHARGED WITH ROBERT GAIL'S MURDER!
. . . AND I'M BRINGING ONE MAN IN WITH ME NOW.
JOE WAS TAKEN OUT TO THE WAITING POLICE CAR. ON HIS WAY TO THE POLICE STATION HE TOLD THEM HOW HE HAD MET GAIL AND GARRY MELTON, BUT HE COULD SEE FROM SERGEANT COOPER'S EXPRESSION THAT HE DID NOT BELIEVE HIM.
THIS MAN MELTON YOU KEEP ON ABOUT WILL BE FOUND SURE ENOUGH ~ IF HE EXISTS!
IF HE EXISTS? MY GOSH, DO YOU THINK I MADE HIM UP AND SENT THE LETTER TO MYSELF?
THE ROAD TO THE POLICE STATION PASSED THE ORPHEUS CINEMA, AND A GASP ESCAPED JOE'S LIPS AS HE SAW HENRIETTA STANDING BESIDE THE PAY BOX.
HENRIETTA!

UNAWARE THAT JOE WAS NEAR, HENRIETTA APPROACHED THE PAY BOX WHERE SHE WAS RECOGNISED BY THE TICKET OPERATOR. FOR JOE AND HENRIETTA WERE REGULAR PICTURE-GOERS.
ALL ALONE TONIGHT, DEAR?
YES. JOE COULDN'T GET AWAY.

MEANWHILE, THE POLICE CAR DROVE ON. BUT SUDDENLY, AS A LORRY SWERVED JUST AHEAD, THE POLICE DRIVER BRAKED HARD. THE CAR LURCHED TO A STANDSTILL, AND SERGEANT COOPER LEANED FORWARD IRRITABLY. FOR THAT BRIEF MOMENT, JOE WAS UNWATCHED . .
STEADY, MAN!

THE DRAMATIC GLIMPSE OF HIS GIRL AWOKE IN JOE AN OVERWHELMING DESIRE TO TELL HER WHAT HAD HAPPENED, AND FOR ONCE IN HIS LEVEL-HEADED LIFE HE ACTED ON IMPULSE . . .
STOP THAT MAN!

FEAR GAVE JOE SPEED. SOMEONE CALLED AFTER HIM, AND A POLICE WHISTLE SHRILLED. HE RAN— BUT AS HE RAN, THE NEED TO TALK TO HENRIETTA REMAINED UPPERMOST IN HIS MIND. AND SO HE DID THE ONE THING HIS PURSUERS DID NOT EXPECT— HE DOUBLED BACK ON HIS TRACKS— AND RETURNED TO THE CINEMA.

FORTUNATELY, THE USHERETTE KNEW THEM BOTH, AND WAS ABLE TO TAKE HIM TO HENRIETTA, WHO ROSE FROM HER SEAT ON SEEING HIM.

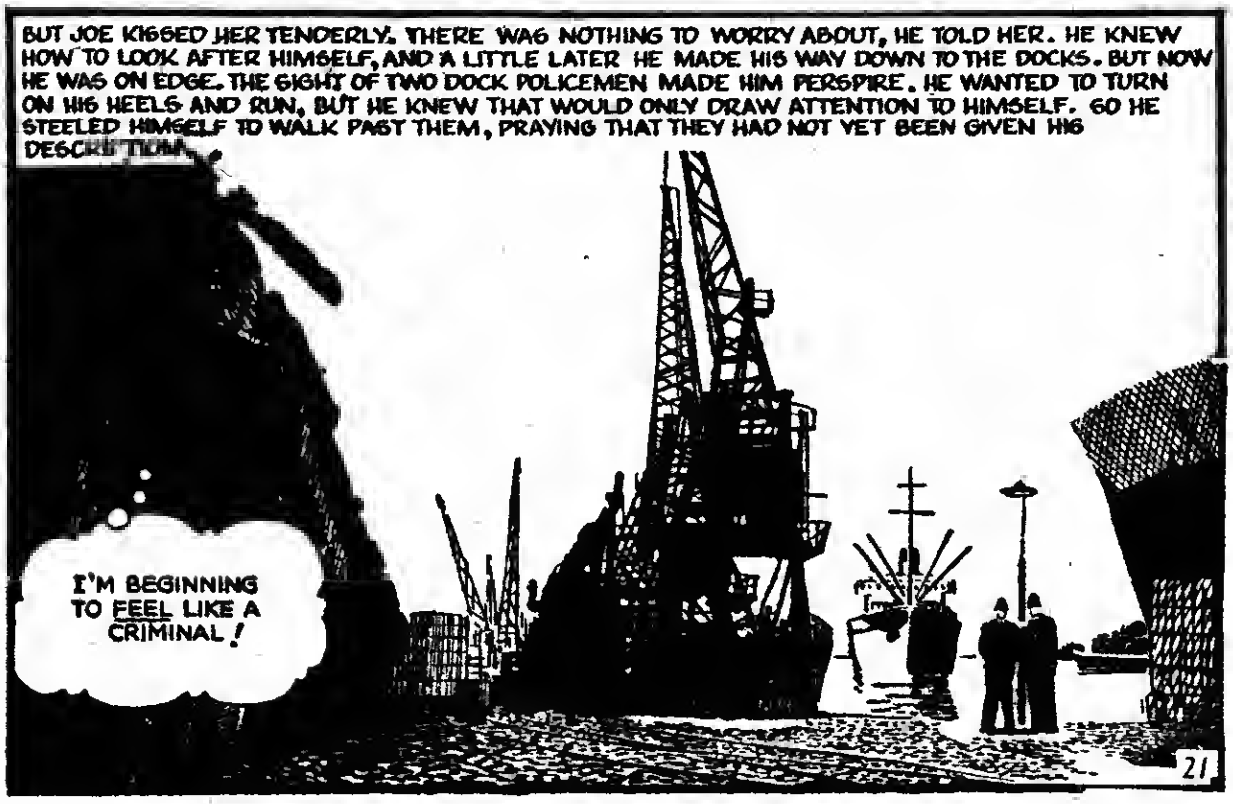
QUICKLY, JOE TOLD HER OF THE TRAGEDY AND HIS OWN DANGER.

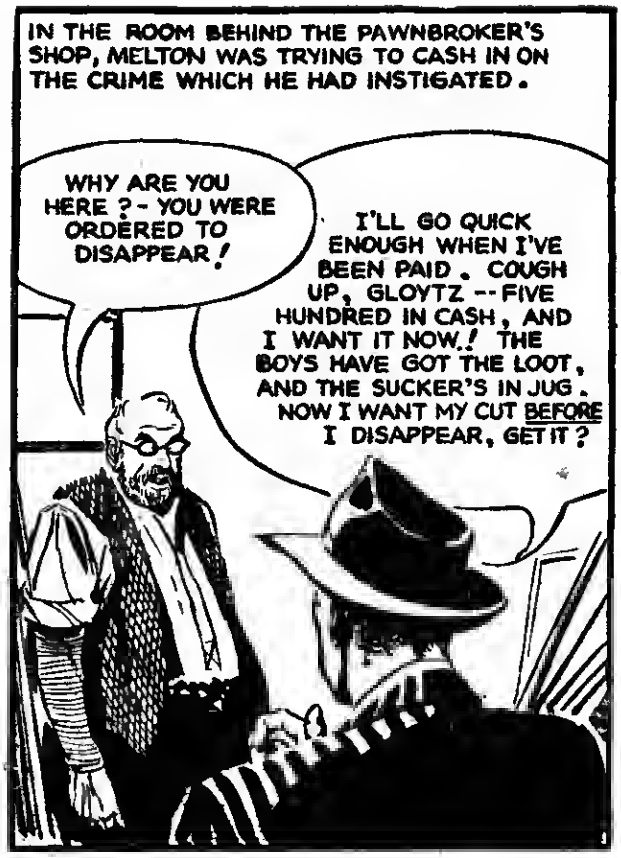
AS THE WHISPERED, BREATHLESS WORDS CAME TO AN END, HENRIETTA SUGGESTED THEY LEAVE THE CINEMA.

BY ENTERING THE CINEMA, JOE HAD UNWITTINGLY THROWN THE POLICE COMPLETELY OFF THE SCENT. WHEN HE AND HENRIETTA CAME OUT OF THE SIDE ENTRANCE A FEW MINUTES LATER, THERE WAS NO SIGN OF A HUE AND CRY.

HE GAVE A KING'S HILL ADDRESS BUT I KNEW HE WAS LYING . AND HE TOOK A QUAY ROAD BUS - WAIT - HE SAID HE WAS AN ASSISTANT TO SOMEBODY, AND HE MENTIONED A NAME - A FOREIGN SOUNDING NAME . . GRAATZ . . GLOYTZ . . .

JOE SNAPPED HIS FINGERS EXCITEDLY, ALREADY HE FELT EAGIER IN HIS MIND NOW THAT HE HAD CONFIDED IN HENRIETTA . .
THAT'S IT - GLOYTZ ! HENRIETTA, YOU'RE A MARVEL - I'D NEVER HAVE REMEMBERED . NOW LISTEN - I'M GOING TO HAVE A SHOT AT TRACING MELTON BEFORE I'M FOUND BY THE POLICE !
JOE . . . I'M SO TERRIFIED !


BUT JOE KISSED HER TENDERLY. THERE WAS NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT, HE TOLD HER. HE KNEW HOW TO LOOK AFTER HIMSELF, AND A LITTLE LATER HE MADE HIS WAY DOWN TO THE DOCKS. BUT NOW HE WAS ON EDGE. THE SIGHT OF TWO DOCK POLICEMEN MADE HIM PERSPIRE. HE WANTED TO TURN ON HIS HEELS AND RUN, BUT HE KNEW THAT WOULD ONLY DRAW ATTENTION TO HIMSELF. SO HE STEELED HIMSELF TO WALK PAST THEM, PRAYING THAT THEY HAD NOT YET BEEN GIVEN HIS DESCRIPTION . . .
I'M BEGINNING TO FEEL LIKE A CRIMINAL !


IN THE ROOM BEHIND THE PAWNBROKER'S SHOP, MELTON WAS TRYING TO CASH IN ON THE CRIME WHICH HE HAD INSTIGATED.
WHY ARE YOU HERE ? - YOU WERE ORDERED TO DISAPPEAR!
I'LL GO QUICK ENOUGH WHEN I'VE BEEN PAID. COUGH UP, GLOYTZ -- FIVE HUNDRED IN CASH, AND I WANT IT NOW! THE BOYS HAVE GOT THE LOOT, AND THE SUCKER'S IN JUG. NOW I WANT MY CUT BEFORE I DISAPPEAR, GET IT?

THE PAWNBROKER'S EYES GLITTERED..
YOU BLACKMAILING YOUNG FOOL. IF THE BOYS FIND YOU HERE THERE'LL BE TROUBLE..
YEAH -- TROUBLE FOR YOU. SO HURRY!

~AND OUTSIDE, JOE CAME QUIETLY OUT OF THE SHADOWS. IT HAD TAKEN HIM SOME TIME TO FIND THE PAWNBROKERS. BUT NOW HE STOOD IN THE DARKNESS, STARING AT THE LIGHTED DOOR, AND HE GRUNTED WITH SATISFACTION.
GLOYTZ - THAT'S THE NAME. AND THERE'S SOMEBODY IN!
22

AS JOE KNOCKED AT THE SIDE DOOR, MELTON SWUNG ROUND, THE COLOUR DRAINING FROM HIS FACE...
CRIMY! THE GANG'S HERE ALREADY!
..AND FEAR GRIPPED HIM, FOR HE WAS SUPPOSED TO HAVE DISAPPEARED!

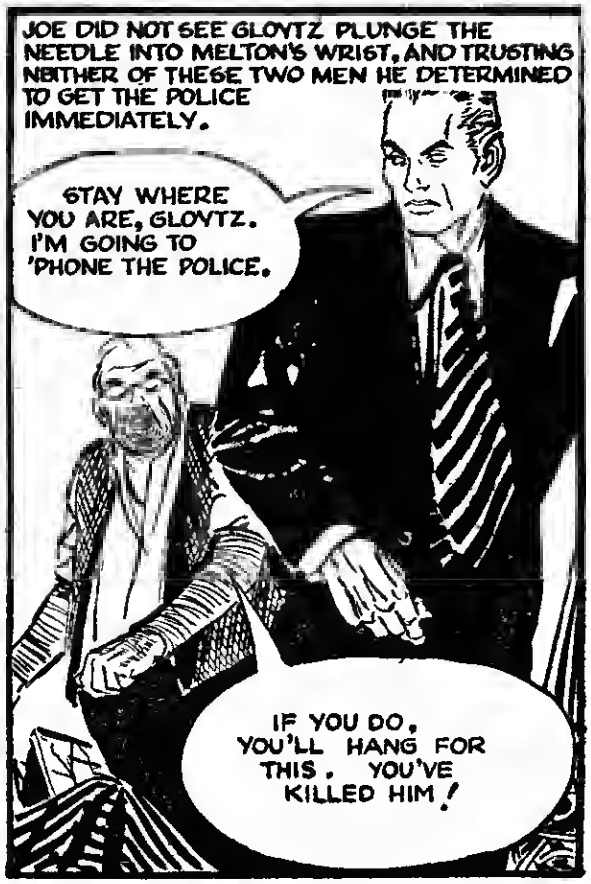
WHEN JOE RECEIVED NO ANSWER TO HIS KNOCK, HE TRIED THE DOOR. IT WAS UNLOCKED. GRIM-FACED, HE STRODE IN.

IT'S THE SUCKER!

MELTON, YOU'RE COMING WITH ME TO THE POLICE!

SO YOU DID TALK TOO MUCH, MELTON...

MELTON HAD ALREADY TALKED- BUT HE MUST NOT TALK ANY MORE! HIS HAND SLID SILENTLY TO HIS POCKET AND WITHDREW A TINY HYPODERMIC SYRINGE. THERE WAS ONE WAY IN WHICH HE COULD SILENCE MELTON- - -
- - AND AT THE SAME TIME RID HIMSELF OF JOE!


JOE DID NOT SEE GLOYTZ PLUNGE THE NEEDLE INTO MELTON'S WRIST, AND TRUSTING NEITHER OF THESE TWO MEN HE DETERMINED TO GET THE POLICE IMMEDIATELY.
STAY WHERE YOU ARE, GLOYTZ. I'M GOING TO 'PHONE THE POLICE.
IF YOU DO, YOU'LL HANG FOR THIS. YOU'VE KILLED HIM!

JOE GASPED AND SWUNG ROUND -
MELTON DEAD! - I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!

HIS BRAIN WHIRLED UNDER THIS FRESH SHOCK. HAD HE, IN TRYING TO PROVE HIMSELF INNOCENT OF MURDER, KILLED A MAN? HE LURCHED DAZEDLY FROM THE SHOP.
IT'S THE SUCKER. HE'S ESCAPED AND SLUGGED MELTON.
GET HIM!
WHAT THE..

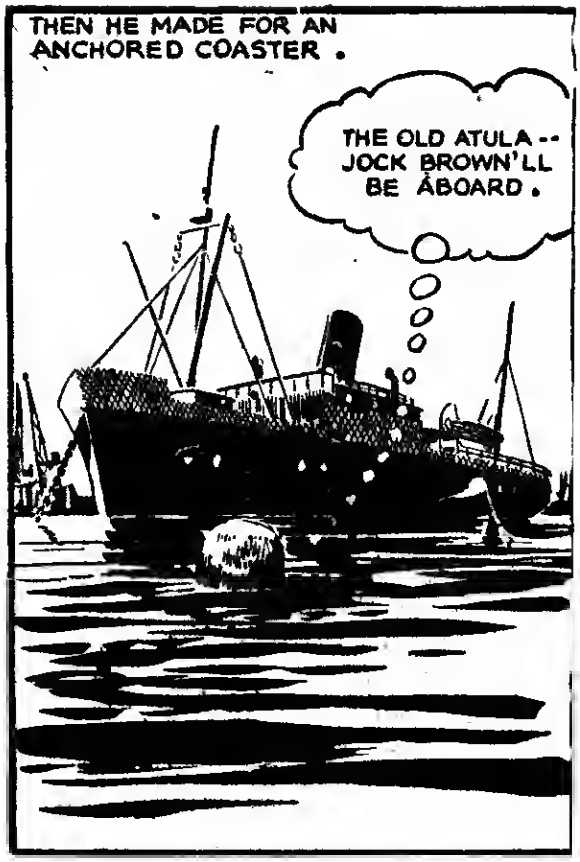
JOE REALISED THAT HE MUST HAVE COME UP AGAINST THE REST OF THE GANG WHO HAD MURDERED GAIL, AND HE MADE A DASH FOR IT.
I KNOW TOO MUCH. I'VE GOT TO GET AWAY!

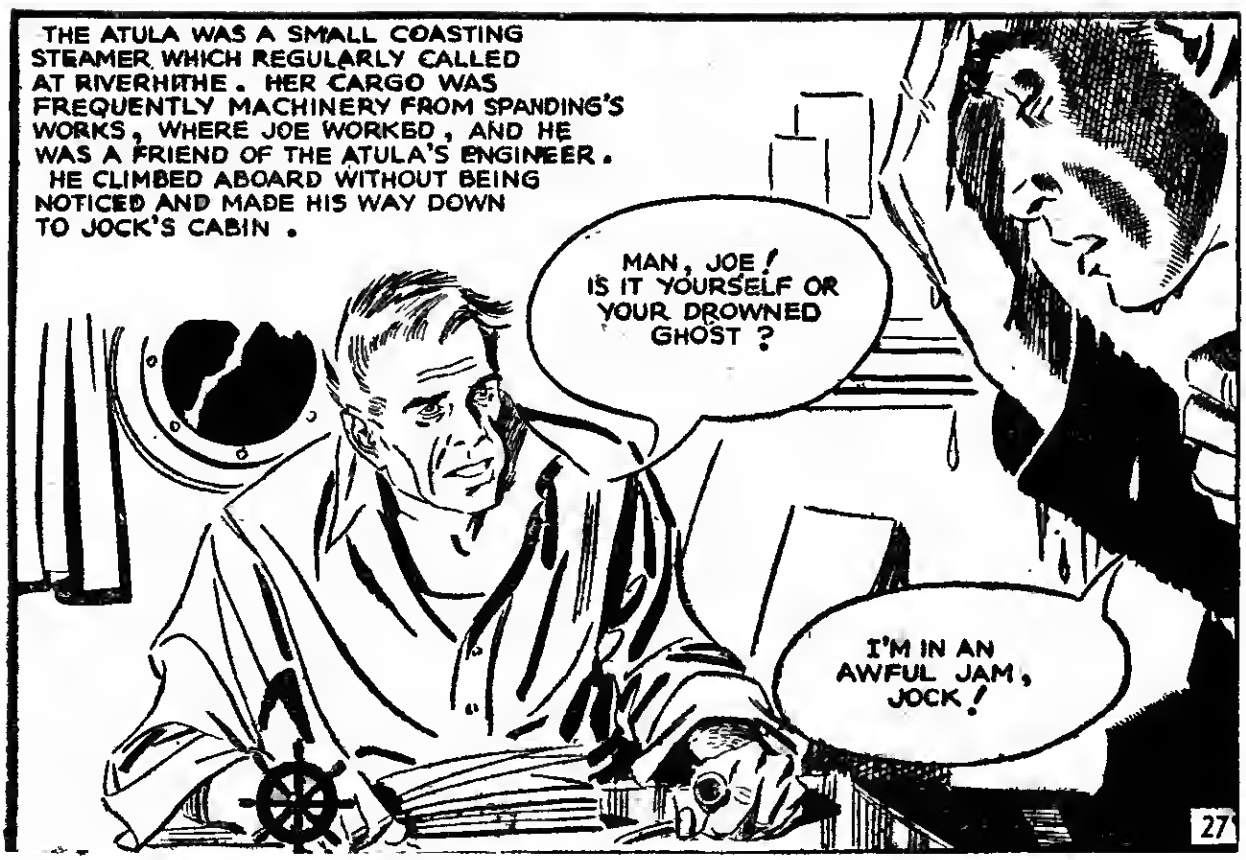
WITH FEAR NAGGING AT HIS BRAIN, JOE RACED OFF DOWN THE DARK ALLEY. THE MEN CAME AFTER HIM SILENTLY. JOE TORE PAST THE WAREHOUSES, LOOMING ON EITHER SIDE OF HIM. BUT THE PURSUING FOOTSTEPS SOUNDED NEARER. JOE FELT AS THOUGH HIS HEART WOULD BURST, AND THEN SUDDENLY A CRY OF HORROR ESCAPED HIS LIPS. FOR HE HAD COME TO THE END OF THE WHARF! AND BEHIND HIM WAS THE GANG!
WE'VE GOT HIM TRAPPED!

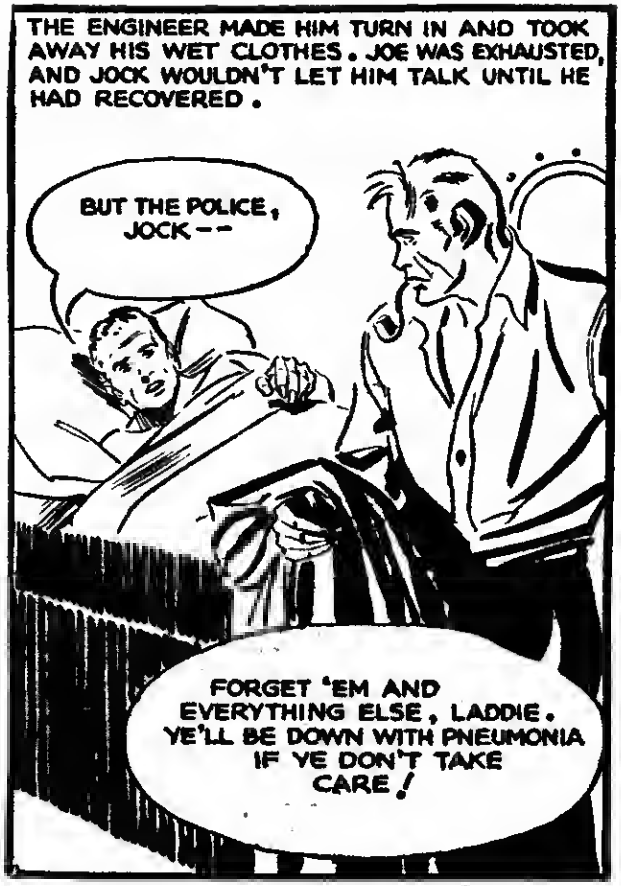
JOE'S POWERFUL SWIMMING HAD SAVED ROBERT GAIL FROM THE SUNKEN CAR.
NOW HIS OWN LIFE DEPENDED ON IT . . .

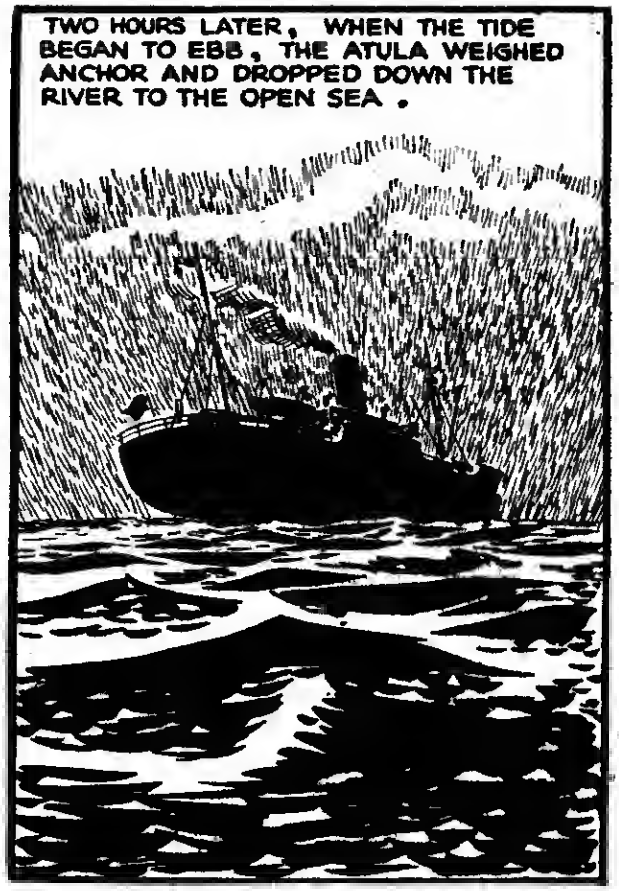
AS JOE DIVED FROM THE WHARF, TWO OF THE GANG LEAPT INTO A ROWING BOAT, AND SET OFF AFTER HIM, BUT PRESENTLY THEY GAVE UP THE SEARCH.
CAN YOU SEE HIM ?
NO. HE'S SUNK. I RECKON HE'S HAD IT.

SURFACING AFTER HIS LONG UNDERWATER SWIM, JOE TROD WATER SILENTLY WHILE THE BOAT DRIFTED OUT OF EARSHOT.


THEN HE MADE FOR AN ANCHORED COASTER.
THE OLD ATULA -- JOCK BROWN'LL BE ABOARD.


THE ATULA WAS A SMALL COASTING STEAMER WHICH REGULARLY CALLED AT RIVERHITHE. HER CARGO WAS FREQUENTLY MACHINERY FROM SPANDING'S WORKS, WHERE JOE WORKED, AND HE WAS A FRIEND OF THE ATULA'S ENGINEER. HE CLIMBED ABOARD WITHOUT BEING NOTICED AND MADE HIS WAY DOWN TO JOCK'S CABIN.
MAN, JOE! IS IT YOURSELF OR YOUR DROWNED GHOST?
I'M IN AN AWFUL JAM, JOCK!

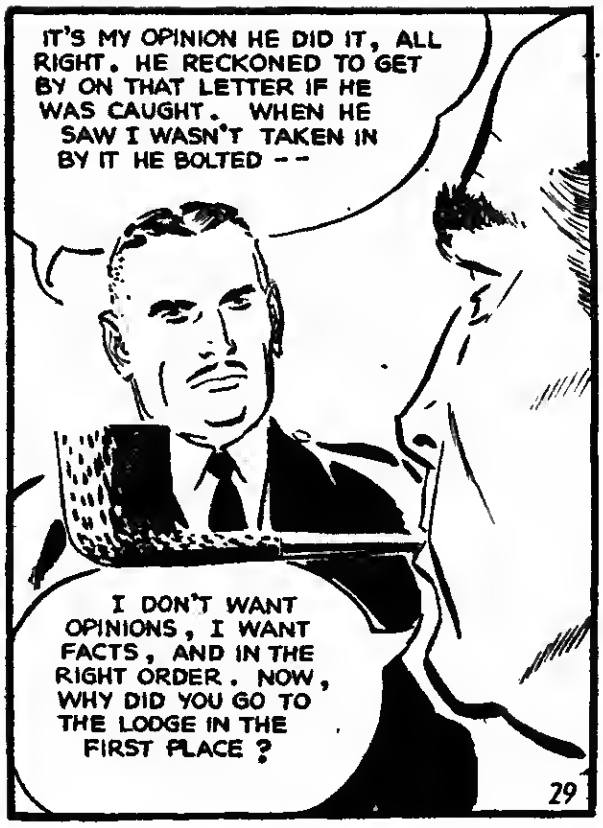

THE ENGINEER MADE HIM TURN IN AND TOOK AWAY HIS WET CLOTHES. JOE WAS EXHAUSTED, AND JOCK WOULDN'T LET HIM TALK UNTIL HE HAD RECOVERED.
BUT THE POLICE, JOCK--
FORGET 'EM AND EVERYTHING ELSE, LADDIE. YE'LL BE DOWN WITH PNEUMONIA IF YE DON'T TAKE CARE!


TWO HOURS LATER, WHEN THE TIDE BEGAN TO EBB, THE ATULA WEIGHED ANCHOR AND DROPPED DOWN THE RIVER TO THE OPEN SEA.

THE GAIL MURDER CASE WAS PASSED TO SCOTLAND YARD. THE COMMISSIONER FELT MORE THAN OFFICIAL INTEREST IN THE CASE; HE KNEW GAIL SLIGHTLY AND HE SHARED THE OLD CONNOISSEUR'S INTEREST IN MEDIEVAL JEWELLERY.
INSPECTOR BULL, I WANT YOU TO TAKE OVER A CASE AT RIVERHITHE IMMEDIATELY.
YES, SIR.

I BELIEVE IT IS A WELL PLANNED CRIME - ONE OF A SERIES IN WHICH VALUABLE PERIOD JEWELLERY IS STOLEN IN ENGLAND TO TURN UP MYSTERIOUSLY IN AMERICA, WHERE THEY'LL PAY FABULOUS PRICES FOR IT.
A WELL ORGANISED GANG JOB, EH? FROM THE REPORT IT LOOKS AS THOUGH THE LOCAL MEN SLIPPED UP BADLY. THEY CAUGHT ONE OF THE GANG AND LET HIM GET AWAY.

INSPECTOR BULL'S FIRST INTERVIEW WAS WITH THE SERGEANT WHO HAD DISCOVERED JOE AT BACKWATER LODGE.
NOW, SERGEANT, THIS SUSPECT YOU LET SLIP THROUGH YOUR FINGERS...
I'LL NEVER LIVE THAT DOWN, INSPECTOR!


IT'S MY OPINION HE DID IT, ALL RIGHT. HE RECKONED TO GET BY ON THAT LETTER IF HE WAS CAUGHT. WHEN HE SAW I WASN'T TAKEN IN BY IT HE BOLTED --
I DON'T WANT OPINIONS, I WANT FACTS, AND IN THE RIGHT ORDER. NOW, WHY DID YOU GO TO THE LODGE IN THE FIRST PLACE?

INSPECTOR BULL LEARNED THAT A MAN WHO HAD DESCRIBED HIMSELF AS A PASSER-BY HAD PHONED THE POLICE FROM A CALL BOX NEAR THE LODGE, SAYING THAT HE HAD SEEN A SUSPICIOUS LOOKING MAN ENTERING THE HOUSE. THIS CALLER HAD NOT YET BEEN TRACED.

WITH ALL THAT THE LOCAL MEN COULD TELL HIM STORED AWAY IN HIS METHODICAL MIND, INSPECTOR BULL VISITED THE SCENE OF THE CRIME WITH THE FINGERPRINT AND PHOTO MEN.

A SINGULARLY POOR FAKE IF EVER THERE WAS ONE. AN AMATEUR'S JOB ... AND THE ESCAPED MAN IS A RESPECTABLE LOCAL EMPLOYEE. I WONDER IF THE COMMISSIONER'S CLEVERLY ORGANISED GANG THEORY IS RIGHT AFTER ALL ...

BULL STUDIED THE LETTER THAT HAD BEEN SENT TO JOE.

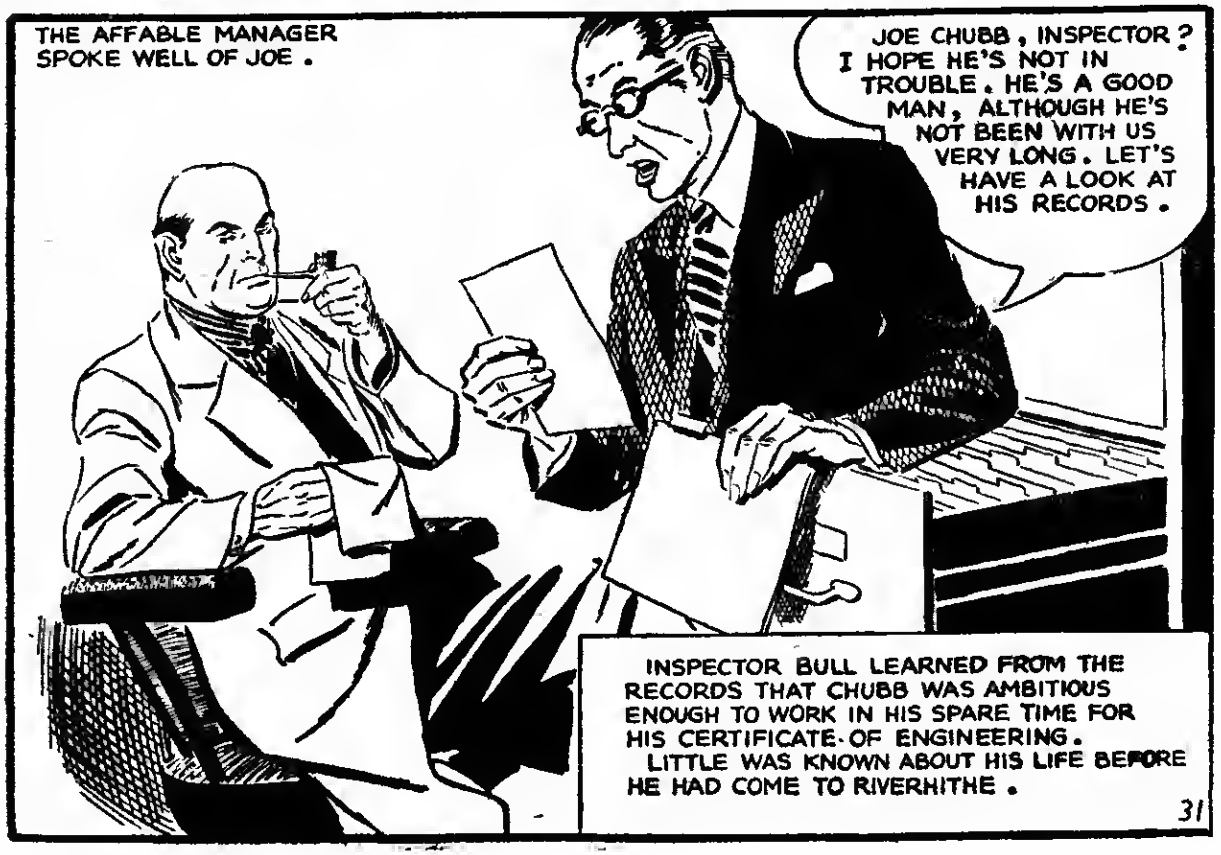
TYPED ON A REMANA MACHINE, OFFICE MODEL, WITH THE LETTER 'I' OUT OF ALIGNMENT AND OTHER TYPE IRREGULARITIES WHICH SHOULDN'T BE DIFFICULT TO TRACE.

HE VISITED SPANDINGS SOON AFTER WORK STARTED NEXT MORNING ...

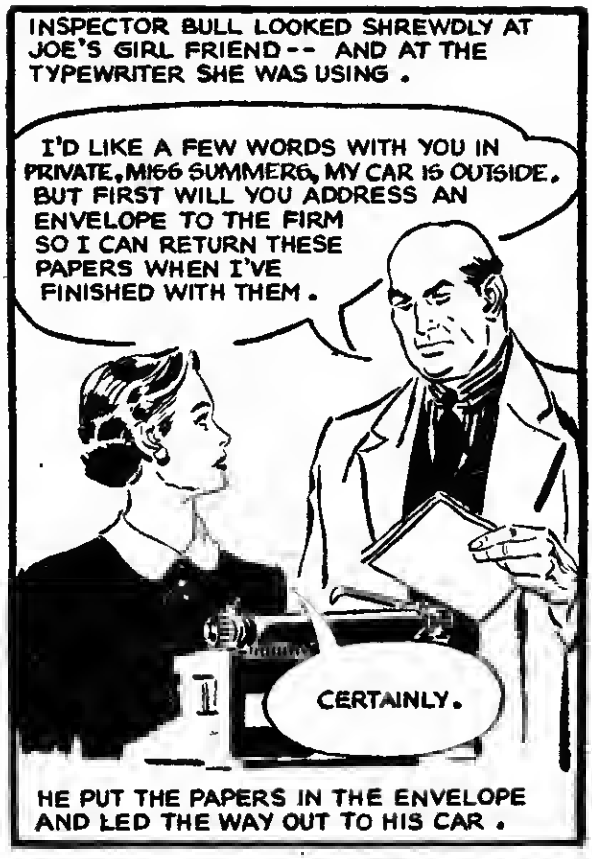
NO SIR, JOE CHUBB HASN'T COME IN YET. FIRST TIME HE'S EVER BEEN LATE --

THEN I'D LIKE TO SEE THE WORKS MANAGER, IF YOU PLEASE.

HE WENT TO THE WORKS MANAGER'S OFFICE TO ENQUIRE ABOUT THE MISSING EMPLOYEE. HENRIETTA'S HEART SANK, FOR HER WOMAN'S INTUITION TOLD HER THAT HE WAS A POLICE OFFICER.
WORKS MANAGER


THE AFFABLE MANAGER SPOKE WELL OF JOE.
JOE CHUBB, INSPECTOR? I HOPE HE'S NOT IN TROUBLE. HE'S A GOOD MAN, ALTHOUGH HE'S NOT BEEN WITH US VERY LONG. LET'S HAVE A LOOK AT HIS RECORDS.
INSPECTOR BULL LEARNED FROM THE RECORDS THAT CHUBB WAS AMBITIOUS ENOUGH TO WORK IN HIS SPARE TIME FOR HIS CERTIFICATE OF ENGINEERING.
LITTLE WAS KNOWN ABOUT HIS LIFE BEFORE HE HAD COME TO RIVERHITHE.

AS THEY LEFT THE OFFICE . .
THERE'S SOMEBODY WHO KNOWS MORE ABOUT CHUBB THAN I CAN TELL YOU. I HAPPEN TO KNOW HE IS AMBITIOUS IN ANOTHER DIRECTION. MISS SUMMER'S A SMART AND CLEVER GIRL.
THANKS FOR THE HINT. I'LL HAVE A WORD WITH HER. AND FOR THE TIME BEING I'LL KEEP CHUBB'S RECORD CARDS.


INSPECTOR BULL LOOKED SHREWDLY AT JOE'S GIRL FRIEND -- AND AT THE TYPEWRITER SHE WAS USING.
I'D LIKE A FEW WORDS WITH YOU IN PRIVATE, MISS SUMMERS, MY CAR IS OUTSIDE. BUT FIRST WILL YOU ADDRESS AN ENVELOPE TO THE FIRM SO I CAN RETURN THESE PAPERS WHEN I'VE FINISHED WITH THEM.
CERTAINLY.
HE PUT THE PAPERS IN THE ENVELOPE AND LED THE WAY OUT TO HIS CAR.

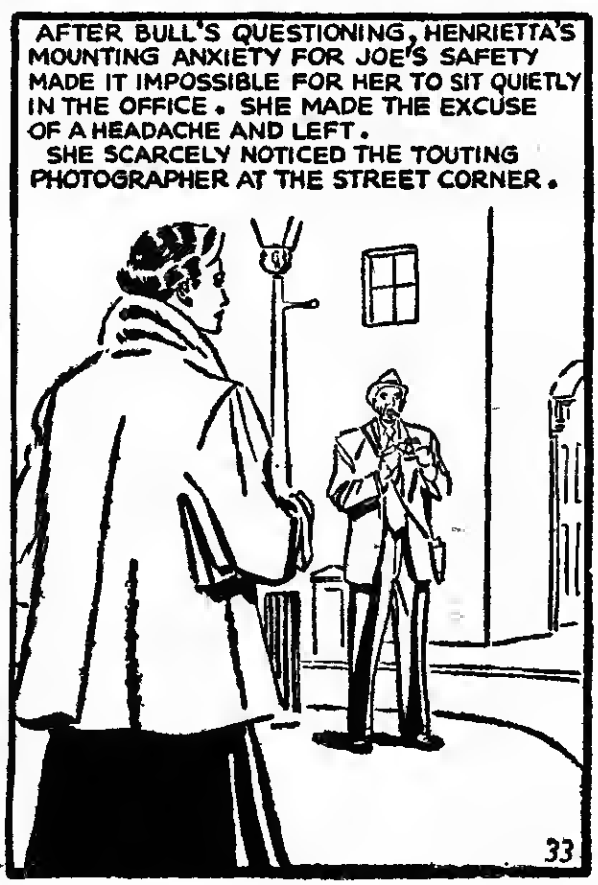
I WANT YOU TO TELL ME IN CONFIDENCE ABOUT A MAN CALLED JOE CHUBB. I BELIEVE YOU KNOW HIM ?
YES, I KNOW HIM.. QUITE WELL..

HENRIETTA TOLD ABOUT ROBERT GAIL'S CAR ACCIDENT AND OF WHAT HAPPENED AT BACKWATER LODGE AFTERWARDS. SHE TOLD HOW A LETTER HAD COME THE PREVIOUS DAY, ASKING JOE TO GO TO GAIL'S HOUSE TO PROTECT HIM AGAINST GARRY MELTON, AND MENTIONED HER OWN SUSPICIONS OF THE SPIV.
THANK YOU, MISS SUMMERS. THAT IS VERY HELPFUL INFORMATION. NOW, JUST ONE QUESTION: WHAT DID YOU DO YESTERDAY EVENING?
I WENT TO THE CINEMA. TO THE ORPHEUS. I WENT ALONE.

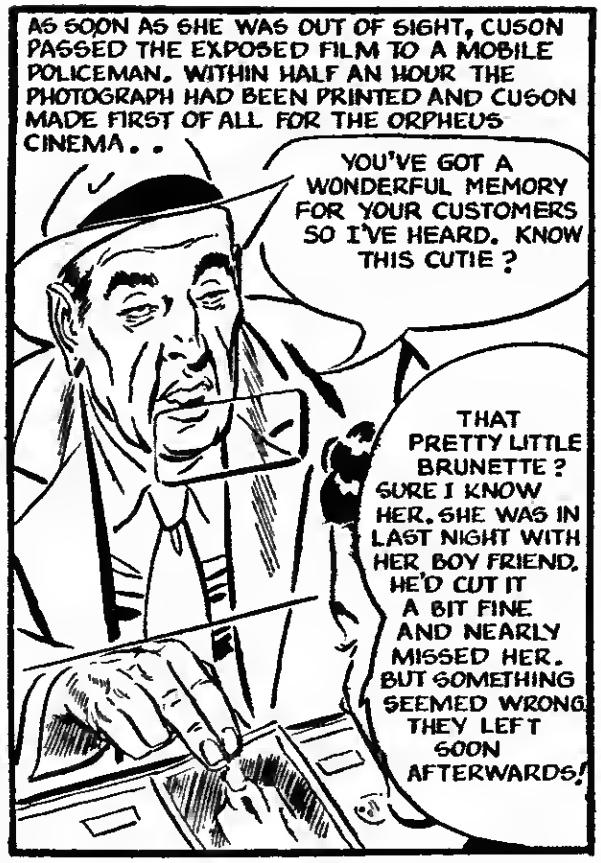
INSPECTOR BULL STARED AFTER HER THOUGHTFULLY. .
SHE DIDN'T ASK WHY I WAS ENQUIRING, NOR WHERE CHUBB IS THIS MORNING. IT'S A STRANGE WOMAN WHO DOESN'T ASK QUESTIONS!

-- OR A GUILTY ONE!

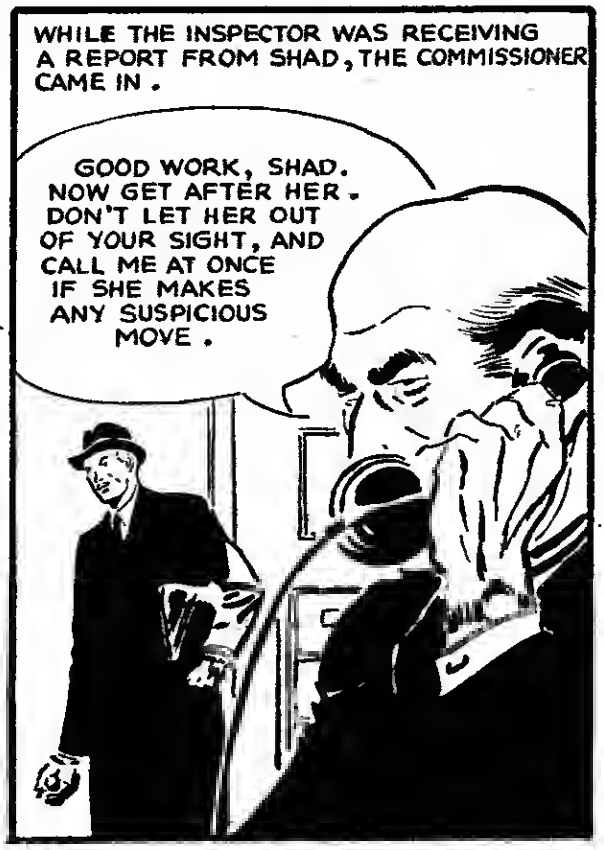
RETURNING TO HEADQUARTERS, BULL SENT FOR "SHADOW" CUSON, A PLAIN CLOTHES MAN.
JOB FOR YOU, SHAD. KEEP TABS ON THIS YOUNG WOMAN. CHECK HER MOVEMENTS YESTERDAY EVENING. HERE'S HER NAME AND DESCRIPTION AND WHAT IS KNOWN ABOUT HER, BUT WE'VE NO PHOTOGRAPH.
I'LL GET ONE.


AFTER BULL'S QUESTIONING, HENRIETTA'S MOUNTING ANXIETY FOR JOE'S SAFETY MADE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR HER TO SIT QUIETLY IN THE OFFICE. SHE MADE THE EXCUSE OF A HEADACHE AND LEFT.
SHE SCARCELY NOTICED THE TOUTING PHOTOGRAPHER AT THE STREET CORNER.

THE DISGUISED CUSON 'SNAPPED' HER. HE OFFERED HER A BLUE BUSINESS CARD, BUT WEARILY HENRIETTA SHOOK HER HEAD.
YOUR PICTURE, LADY?


AS SOON AS SHE WAS OUT OF SIGHT, CUSON PASSED THE EXPOSED FILM TO A MOBILE POLICEMAN. WITHIN HALF AN HOUR THE PHOTOGRAPH HAD BEEN PRINTED AND CUSON MADE FIRST OF ALL FOR THE ORPHEUS CINEMA..
YOU'VE GOT A WONDERFUL MEMORY FOR YOUR CUSTOMERS SO I'VE HEARD. KNOW THIS CUTIE?
THAT PRETTY LITTLE BRUNETTE? SURE I KNOW HER. SHE WAS IN LAST NIGHT WITH HER BOY FRIEND. HE'D CUT IT A BIT FINE AND NEARLY MISSED HER. BUT SOMETHING SEEMED WRONG. THEY LEFT SOON AFTERWARDS!

CUSON'S EYES GLEAMED. OUTSIDE HE MET THE CONSTABLE WHO PATROLLED THIS PARTICULAR BEAT, AND HE REMEMBERED HENRIETTA AND JOE LEAVING THE CINEMA.
YES, I SAW HER LAST NIGHT WITH A CHAP JUST HERE. SEEMED TO BE HAVING AN ARGUMENT OR SOMETHING. IT WAS JUST AFTER THAT SUSPECT BOLTED FROM THE POLICE CAR, AND I WASN'T PAYING MUCH ATTENTION TO CINEMA COUPLES.
EXIT


WHILE THE INSPECTOR WAS RECEIVING A REPORT FROM SHAD, THE COMMISSIONER CAME IN.
GOOD WORK, SHAD. NOW GET AFTER HER. DON'T LET HER OUT OF YOUR SIGHT, AND CALL ME AT ONCE IF SHE MAKES ANY SUSPICIOUS MOVE.

THE COMMISSIONER WHO FELT ALMOST PERSONALLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE GAIL COLLECTION, HAD COME DOWN TO RIVERHITHE FOR A FLYING VISIT.

WE'VE TRACED THE FAKED LETTER, SIR. IT WAS TYPED ON THE MACHINE USED BY CHUBB'S GIRL FRIEND AT SPANDINGS; I GOT A SPECIMEN WITHOUT AROUSING HER SUSPICIONS, AND THE TYPE FACE IS IDENTICAL. SHE MET CHUBB AT A CINEMA AFTER HE ESCAPED.

AT A CINEMA? THAT LOOKS LIKE A CAREFULLY PREPARED RENDEZVOUS - POSSIBLY AN ATTEMPT AT AN ALIBI. HAVE YOU ANY POINTERS TO THE REST OF THE GANG?

I'M BEGINNING TO WONDER IF THIS IS THE WORK OF AN EXPERIENCED GANG, SIR. IT LOOKS MORE LIKE AN AMATEUR JOB, AND A PRETTY CLUMSY ONE AT THAT.

BUT THE JEWELS? THEY WERE NOT FOUND ON CHUBB. SOMEONE ELSE MUST HAVE BEEN WITH HIM -- SOMEONE WHO GOT AWAY WITH THE JEWELS BEFORE THE POLICE ARRIVED. WHO?

WHY NOT THE GIRL? SHE COULD HAVE BEEN AT THE HOUSE BEFORE CHUBB ARRIVED. SHE COULD HAVE GOT AWAY WITH THE LOOT BEFORE HE WAS ARRESTED. SHE HAD AMPLE TIME TO HIDE THE JEWELS AND REACH THE CINEMA TO ESTABLISH AN ALIBI.

THE INSPECTOR EXPLAINED WHY HE WAS CONCENTRATING ON HENRIETTA. HE BELIEVED THAT SHE WOULD LEAD THEM TO CHUBB'S HIDING PLACE IF SHE THOUGHT SHE WAS NOT SUSPECTED.

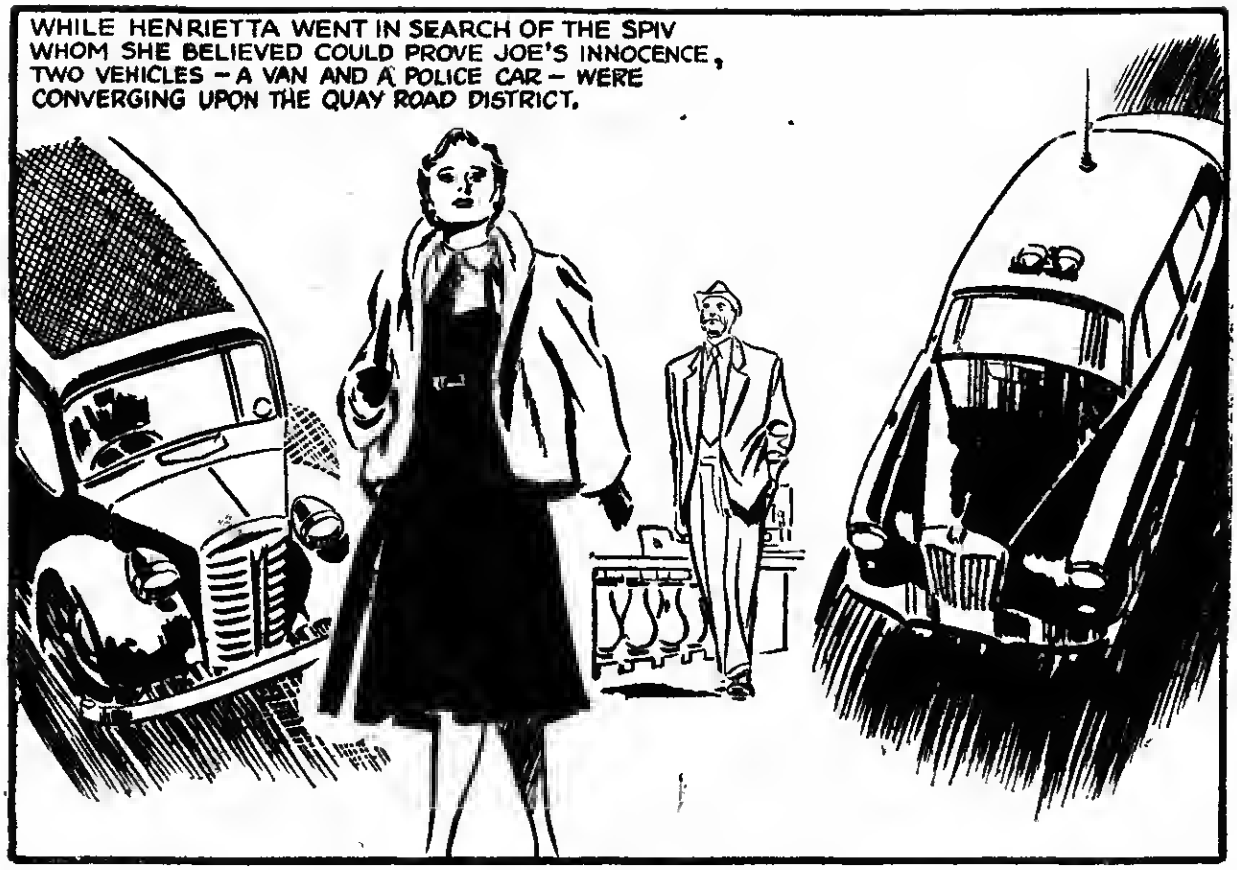
MEANWHILE, HENRIETTA, QUITE UNAWARE THAT SHE WAS BEING SHADOWED, SET OUT FOR QUAY ROAD. SHE WAS DESPERATELY WORRIED BECAUSE JOE HAD NOT GOT IN TOUCH WITH HER, AND REMEMBERING THAT MELTON WORKED FOR SLOYTZ THE PAWNBROKER, SHE DECIDED TO GO THERE AND MAKE ENQUIRIES FOR HERSELF.

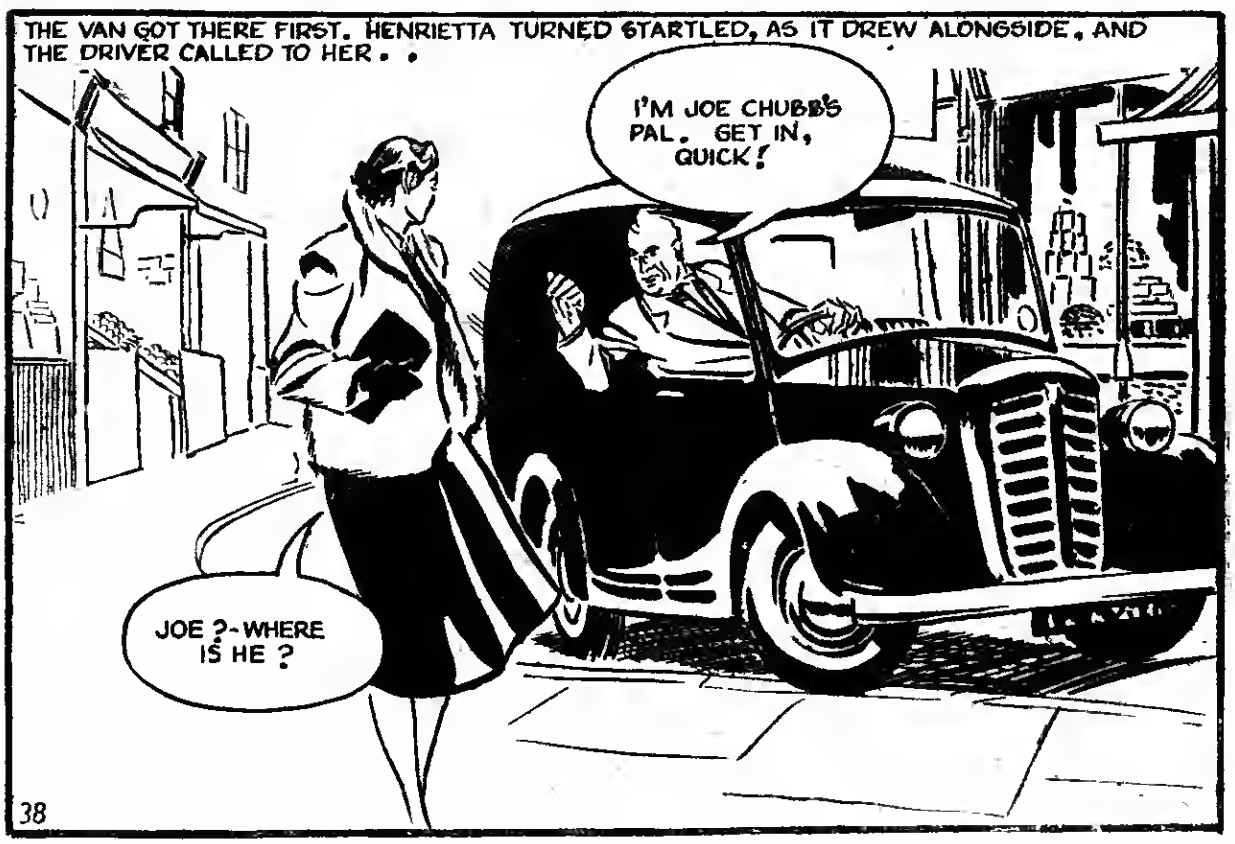
SHE FOUND THE ADDRESS OF GLOYTZ'S SHOP IN THE TELEPHONE DIRECTORY, AND DID NOT DREAM THAT SHADOW CUSON WAS NEAR ~ ~

AS SHE ENTERED THE SHOP, GLOYTZ SHUFFLED FORWARD.
I AM TRYING TO TRACE A MAN WHO SAID HE WORKED IN THIS DISTRICT. HE MENTIONED YOU; NAME IS GARRY MELTON - DO YOU KNOW HIM ?
SO MANY PEOPLE COME TO MY SHOP - TOO MANY NAMES TO REMEMBER, YOUNG LADY. LET ME THINK - GERRY MILTON..

NO - MELTON - GARRY MELTON. OH, PLEASE HELP IF YOU CAN, MR. GLOYTZ. IT'S A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH THAT I FIND TRACE OF HIM !
WAIT WHILE I LOOK IN MY BOOKS. SO MANY NAMES -- SO MANY PEOPLE COME TO POOR PAWNBROKERS FOR HELP...

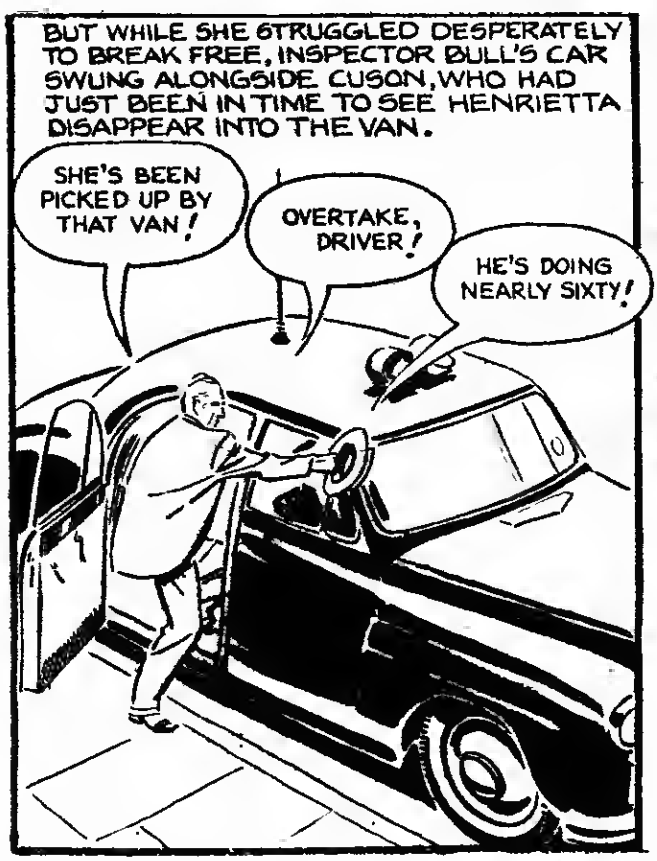
HE SHUFFLED TO A BACK ROOM, BUT NOW FEAR FILLED HIS EYES. HASTILY HE MADE A TELEPHONE CALL . .
IT'S CHUBB'S GIRL. SHE'S TRACED MELTON TO ME. SHE MUST BE FIXED -- AT ONCE, BEFORE THE POLICE GET ON TO HER!
O.K. GIVE HER AN ADDRESS NEAR BURNT WHARF. I'LL HAVE HER PICKED UP IN ABOUT FIFTEEN MINUTES.
MEANWHILE CUSON WAS TELEPHONING, TOO~ BUT TO SCOTLAND YARD . .
SHE'S IN A PAWNBROKER'S SHOP~ NAME OF GLOYTZ. SHE'S BEEN THERE TEN MINUTES. LOOKS LIKE SHE'S CONTACTING SOMEBODY, INSPECTOR . .
RIGHT, SHAD. IT'S TIME I PULLED HER IN. I'LL COME AT ONCE.
HENRIETTA WAS BEGINNING TO GROW IMPATIENT, WHEN GLOYTZ THE PAWNBROKER REAPPEARED~ ~
MELTON~G. MELTON. THAT'S THE NAME, EH? YES, I'VE FOUND HIS ADDRESS. HE LIVES DOWN BY THE OLD BURNT WHARF. I'LL WRITE THE ADDRESS FOR YOU.
AT LAST I CAN PROVE HE REALLY DOES EXIST. I CAN'T THANK YOU ENOUGH MR. GLOYTZ!

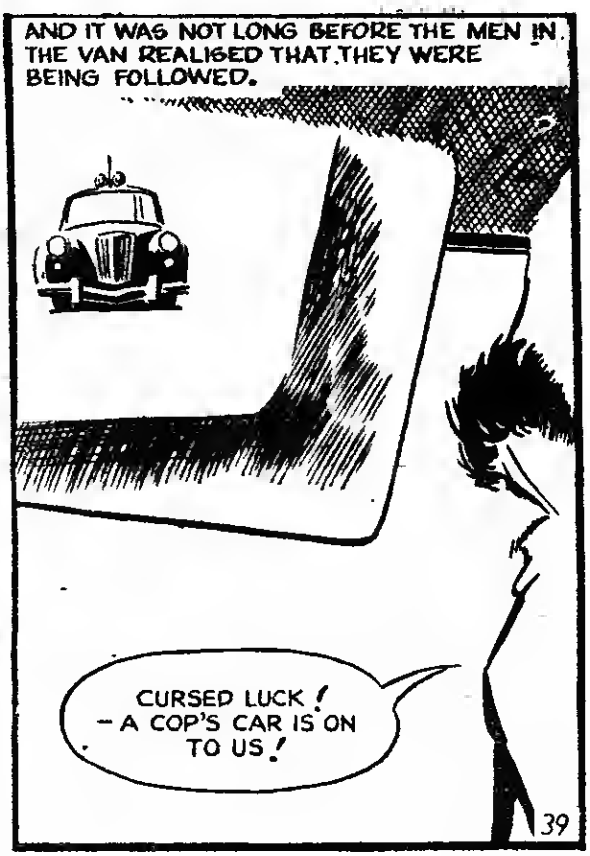

WHILE HENRIETTA WENT IN SEARCH OF THE SPIV WHOM SHE BELIEVED COULD PROVE JOE'S INNOCENCE, TWO VEHICLES – A VAN AND A POLICE CAR – WERE CONVERGING UPON THE QUAY ROAD DISTRICT.


THE VAN GOT THERE FIRST. HENRIETTA TURNED STARTLED, AS IT DREW ALONGSIDE, AND THE DRIVER CALLED TO HER . .
I'M JOE CHUBB'S PAL. GET IN, QUICK!
JOE ?- WHERE IS HE ?

AS HENRIETTA GOT IN, THE VAN MOVED AWAY, SHOOTING DOWN FIRST ONE NARROW COBBLED STREET, AND THEN ANOTHER. SUSPICIOUS NOW, SHE TURNED ANGRILY TO THE DRIVER . .
WHERE ARE YOU TAKING ME?
TAKE IT EASY, SISTER.

THEN SUDDENLY SHE HEARD A SOUND BEHIND HER. BUT BEFORE SHE COULD SCREAM A GLOVED HAND WAS THRUST ACROSS HER MOUTH. A VOICE LAUGHED MOCKINGLY IN HER EAR . .
YOU'RE GOING WHERE CHUBB WENT, ALL RIGHT?


BUT WHILE SHE STRUGGLED DESPERATELY TO BREAK FREE, INSPECTOR BULL'S CAR SWUNG ALONGSIDE CUSON, WHO HAD JUST BEEN IN TIME TO SEE HENRIETTA DISAPPEAR INTO THE VAN.
SHE'S BEEN PICKED UP BY THAT VAN!
OVERTAKE, DRIVER!
HE'S DOING NEARLY SIXTY!


AND IT WAS NOT LONG BEFORE THE MEN IN THE VAN REALISED THAT THEY WERE BEING FOLLOWED.
CURSED LUCK! – A COP'S CAR IS ON TO US!

IT WAS NO ORDINARY MOTOR BENEATH THE BONNET OF THE SPEEDING VAN. . THE SPEEDOMETER NEEDLE QUIVERED OVER THE EIGHTY MARK. THE DRIVER CROUCHED OVER THE WHEEL, SKIDDING ROUND CORNERS ON TWO WHEELS, NARROWLY MISSING TRAFFIC TRAVELLING IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION. BUT THOUGH HE TRIED EVERYTHING HE KNEW, THE POLICE CAR STILL REMAINED IN SIGHT. AND NOW IT WAS DRAWING NEARER. . .

HE SUDDENLY BRAKED. THE TYRES SCREAMED HIDEOUSLY, THE VAN SKIDDED SIDEWAYS, AND SMASHED INTO A BRICK WALL. . BY THE TIME THE POLICE CAR SWUNG ALONGSIDE, THE CROOKS WERE OUT OF SIGHT.

AS INSPECTOR BULL LIFTED THE DAZED HENRIETTA FROM THE VAN A POLICE WHISTLE SHRILLED. .

WE'LL NEVER CATCH 'EM IN THIS WARREN!

THEY DON'T MATTER. THIS IS THE ONE I WANT!

CRYING SOFTLY, HENRIETTA THANKED THE INSPECTOR.

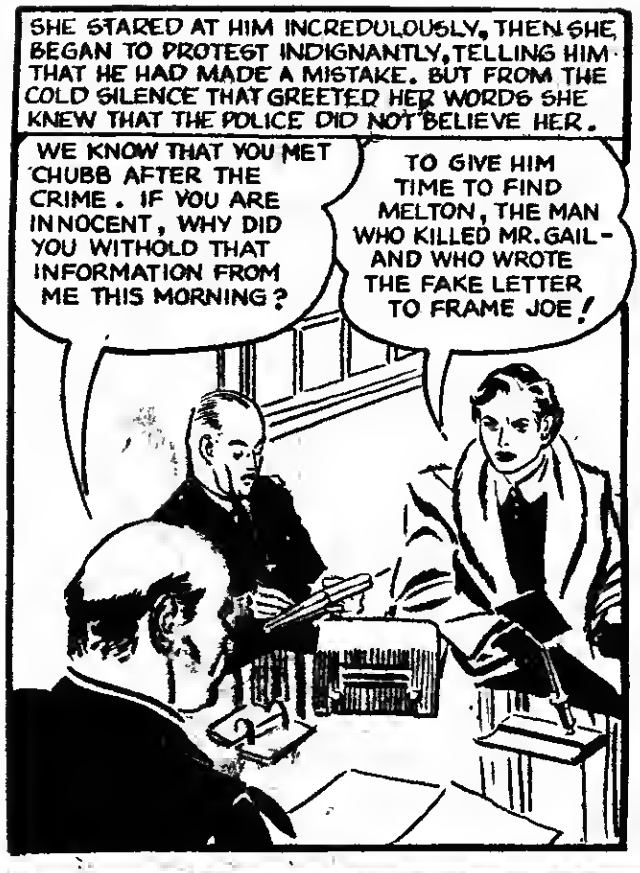
THANK HEAVENS YOU'VE COME, INSPECTOR!

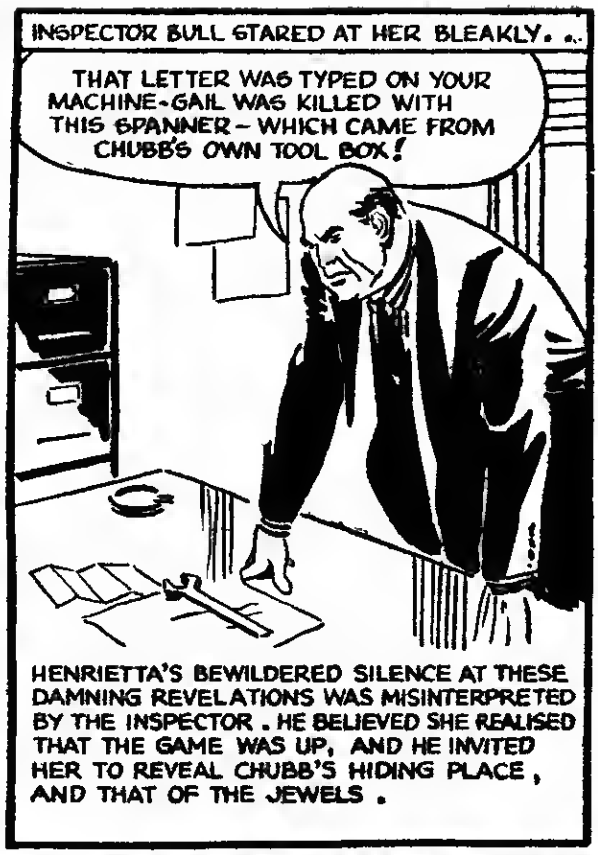
YOU'RE CERTAINLY NO MEAN ACTRESS.

HENRIETTA WAS GLAD OF HIS SUPPORT TO THE WAITING POLICE CAR, BUT THERE SHE RECEIVED A SHOCK. . .

I MUST WARN YOU - ANYTHING YOU SAY MAY BE TAKEN DOWN AND USED IN EVIDENCE AGAINST YOU.

YOU ARE ARRESTING ME? BUT THAT'S FANTASTIC!


SHE STARED AT HIM INCREDULOUSLY, THEN SHE BEGAN TO PROTEST INDIGNANTLY, TELLING HIM THAT HE HAD MADE A MISTAKE. BUT FROM THE COLD SILENCE THAT GREETED HER WORDS SHE KNEW THAT THE POLICE DID NOT BELIEVE HER.
WE KNOW THAT YOU MET CHUBB AFTER THE CRIME. IF YOU ARE INNOCENT, WHY DID YOU WITHOLD THAT INFORMATION FROM ME THIS MORNING?
TO GIVE HIM TIME TO FIND MELTON, THE MAN WHO KILLED MR. GAIL - AND WHO WROTE THE FAKE LETTER TO FRAME JOE!


INSPECTOR BULL STARED AT HER BLEAKLY...
THAT LETTER WAS TYPED ON YOUR MACHINE - GAIL WAS KILLED WITH THIS SPANNER - WHICH CAME FROM CHUBB'S OWN TOOL BOX!
HENRIETTA'S BEWILDERED SILENCE AT THESE DAMNING REVELATIONS WAS MISINTERPRETED BY THE INSPECTOR. HE BELIEVED SHE REALISED THAT THE GAME WAS UP, AND HE INVITED HER TO REVEAL CHUBB'S HIDING PLACE, AND THAT OF THE JEWELS.

HENRIETTA SPRANG UP, HER EYES DILATED WITH FEAR.
YOU BELIEVE THAT JOE AND I DID THIS TERRIBLE THING? - BUT WHY?
THERE'S PLENTY OF MOTIVE. YOU WANT TO GET MARRIED. NEITHER HAS ANY MONEY. THE SIGHT OF ROBERT GAIL'S JEWELS SHOWED AN EASY WAY TO GET RICH. YOU FAKED A LETTER TO THROW SUSPICION ON AN IMAGINARY PERSON CALLED MELTON. YOU ARRANGED AN ALIBI AT THE CINEMA TOGETHER IN CASE YOU WERE TRACED.

HENRIETTA RECOILED FROM HIM, HER LIPS QUIVERING.
YOU MUST BE A MONSTER TO BELIEVE THAT! WHY, JOE SAVED MR. GAIL'S LIFE - HE WOULD DIE RATHER THAN HURT AN OLD MAN. AND WHILE YOU SIT THERE BULLYING A GIRL, JOE'S IN DANGER. THOSE MEN WHO KIDNAPPED ME HAVE GOT HIM!

THEN, ALMOST BESIDE HERSELF WITH ANXIETY, SHE THUMPED HER FIST DOWN ON THE INSPECTOR'S DESK.
I'VE TRACED GARRY MELTON. NOW YOU DO SOMETHING - FIND JOE BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!
THIS IS NOT ACTING.
INSPECTOR BULL WAS DEEPLY IMPRESSED BY THE GIRL'S SINCERITY.

BULL'S CAREFUL ROUTINE ENQUIRIES WERE BEARING FRUIT.
BEG PARDON, SIR. WE'VE TRACED THE TAXI-DRIVER WHO PICKED UP MR. GAIL AFTER THE BRIDGE ACCIDENT. HE'S HERE.
BRING HIM IN.

AT THE POLICE SERGEANT'S WORDS, A SIGH OF RELIEF ESCAPED HENRIETTA'S LIPS.
WOTCHER, MISS.
DESCRIBE THE PEOPLE YOU TOOK WITH MR. GAIL TO BACKWATER LODGE.

THE CAB DRIVER'S WORDS PROVED THAT HENRIETTA HAD NOT LIED.
THERE WAS THIS YOUNG LADY AND HER BOY- THE ONE THAT FISHED MR. GAIL OUT. THEN THERE WAS THE OTHER - A PROPER SPIV IF EVER THERE WAS ONE!

AND SHE LEANED FORWARD TRIUMPHANTLY.
NOW DO YOU BELIEVE MELTON EXISTS ?
GET ON TO THE QUAY ROAD SECTION HOUSE. ORDER MELTON TO BE TRACED AND BROUGHT IN. ASK IF ANYTHING HAS OCCURRED IN THE DISTRICT WHICH MIGHT HELP US.

THE C.I.D MAN GOT THROUGH TO QUAY ROAD STATION. HE LISTENED INTENTLY, AND THEN TURNED TO INSPECTOR BULL.
THEY SAY THERE'S BEEN NOTHING UNUSUAL EXCEPT A DEAD MAN FISHED OUT OF THE RIVER THIS MORNING.

HENRIETTA SWAYED. WITH DIFFICULTY SHE MANAGED TO SPEAK.

A DEAD MAN! THEY'VE KILLED JOE!

WE'LL GO AT ONCE. YOU'LL COME, MISS.

CHEER UP, LADY. NO WATER COULD DROWN THAT CHAP OF YOURS!

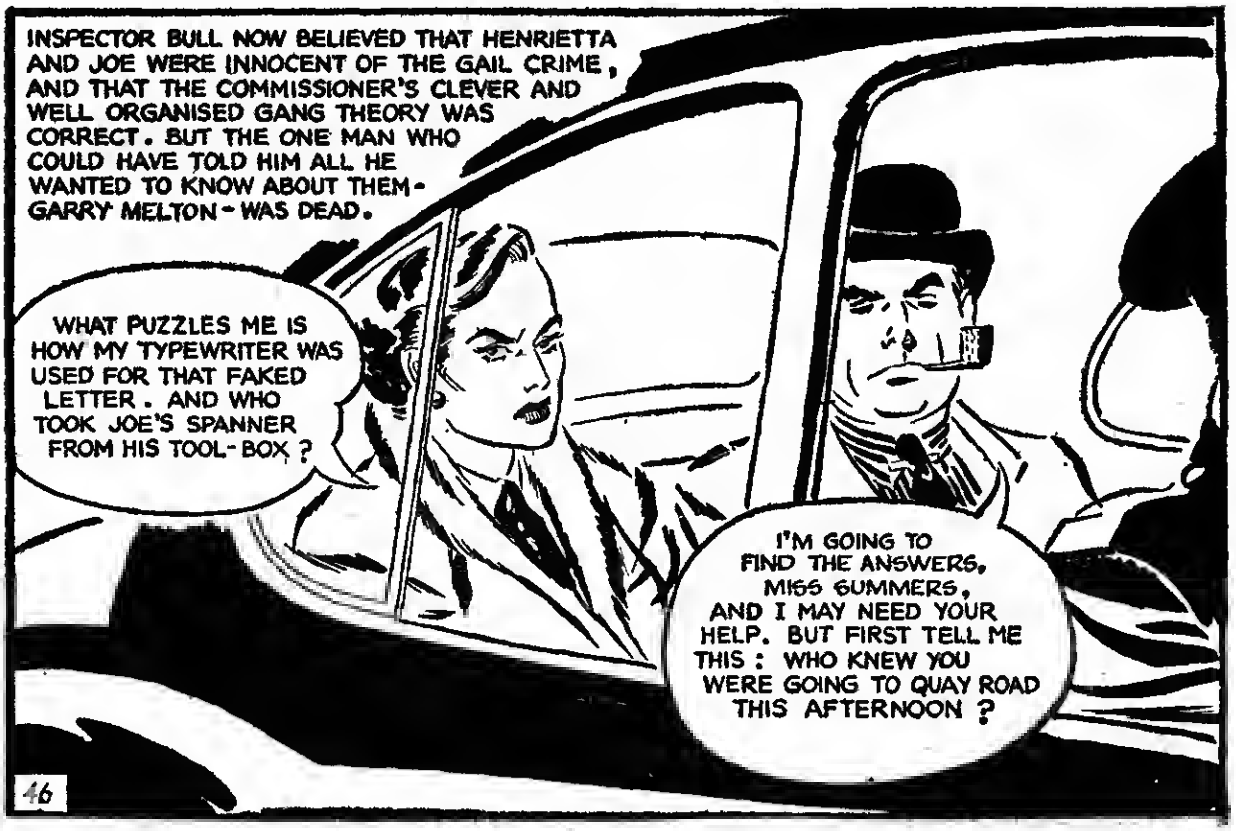
HENRIETTA HAD HAD ALMOST AS MUCH AS SHE COULD STAND. INSPECTOR BULL WAS SYMPATHETIC NOW, AND HE SUGGESTED THAT SHE STAYED UNTIL THEY RETURNED, BUT SHE INSISTED ON ACCOMPANYING HIM TO THE MORTUARY. SHE DREADED ENTERING THE GREY, FORBIDDING BUILDING. IF IT WERE JOE LYING THERE.. SHE SOBBED BITTERLY.

COURAGE!

MORTUARY

ONCE INSIDE, SHE WAITED BREATHLESSLY. .
WHO?

. . AND SUDDENLY THE WORDS SPRANG INVOLUNTARILY FROM HER LIPS . .
IT'S - GARRY MELTON !


INSPECTOR BULL NOW BELIEVED THAT HENRIETTA AND JOE WERE INNOCENT OF THE GAIL CRIME, AND THAT THE COMMISSIONER'S CLEVER AND WELL ORGANISED GANG THEORY WAS CORRECT. BUT THE ONE MAN WHO COULD HAVE TOLD HIM ALL HE WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT THEM - GARRY MELTON - WAS DEAD.
WHAT PUZZLES ME IS HOW MY TYPEWRITER WAS USED FOR THAT FAKED LETTER. AND WHO TOOK JOE'S SPANNER FROM HIS TOOL-BOX ?
I'M GOING TO FIND THE ANSWERS, MISS SUMMERS, AND I MAY NEED YOUR HELP. BUT FIRST TELL ME THIS : WHO KNEW YOU WERE GOING TO QUAY ROAD THIS AFTERNOON ?

NOBODY KNEW. AND I SPOKE TO NOBODY UNTIL I FOUND THE PAWNBROKER'S SHOP - MR. GLOYTZ. HE GAVE ME MELTON'S ADDRESS, BUT THE MEN IN THE VAN CAUGHT UP WITH ME BEFORE I REACHED IT.

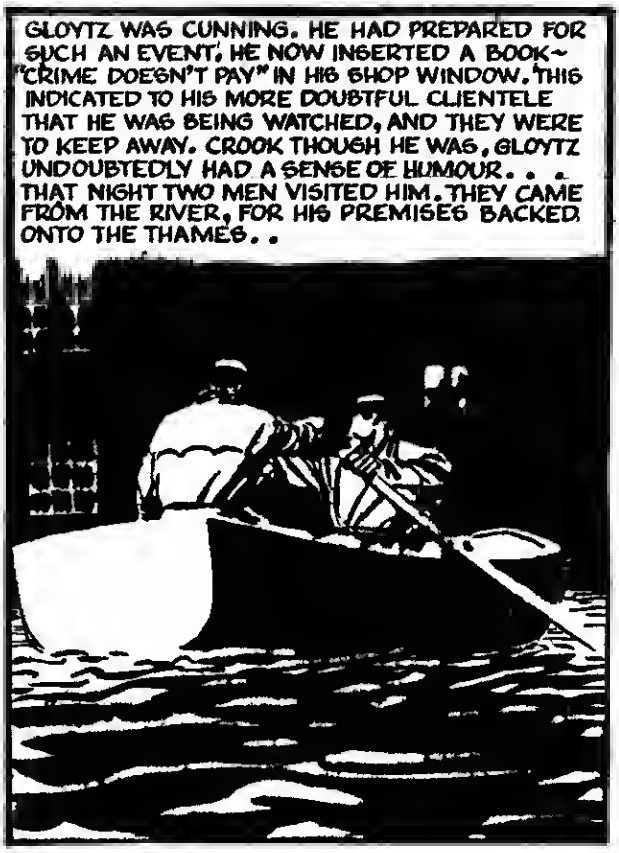
INSPECTOR BULL QUESTIONED HENRIETTA FURTHER, AND THAT EVENING HE STRODE INTO MR GLOYTZ' SHOP. .
GLOYTZ - WHAT HAPPENED TO GARRY MELTON LAST NIGHT WHEN HE CAME HERE ?

BUT GLOYTZ' CUNNING WAS EQUAL TO THE INSPECTOR'S BLUFF.
THAT FOOLISH YOUNG MAN - HE IS IN TROUBLE AGAIN, EH ? ONLY THIS AFTERNOON A PRETTY GIRL CAME ENQUIRING FOR HIM. BUT IT IS THREE DAYS SINCE HE CAME HERE, SIR, AND I SHALL HAVE TO GIVE HIM NOTICE . . .

INSPECTOR BULL'S EYES HARDENED. .
THAT WON'T BE NECESSARY. MELTON HAS BEEN FOUND IN THE RIVER. BELIEVED MURDERED!
GARRY- DEAD? OH, THAT'S DREADFUL!
GLOYTZ' ACTING WAS FAULTLESS, AND BULL COULD DISCOVER NO SHRED OF EVIDENCE AGAINST HIM.

A LITTLE LATER THE INSPECTOR LEFT, BUT AT NEW SCOTLAND YARD, HE GAVE CERTAIN ORDERS.
ANY VISITORS TO THE PAWNBROKER'S SHOP WOULD BE CHECKED. IF GLOYTZ LEFT, HE WOULD BE FOLLOWED.

BUT THE DOCKSIDE PAWNBROKER WAS AWARE THAT INSPECTOR BULL HAD HIM UNDER OBSERVATION.
WHO DO THEY THINK THEY'RE FOOLING? IF THAT MAN DOWN THERE ISN'T A POLICE SPY, I'LL EAT MY HAT! I COULD SMELL A COPPER A MILE AWAY - AND THAT GIVES ME AN IDEA. HE'LL BE A USEFUL ALIBI FOR ME. . .

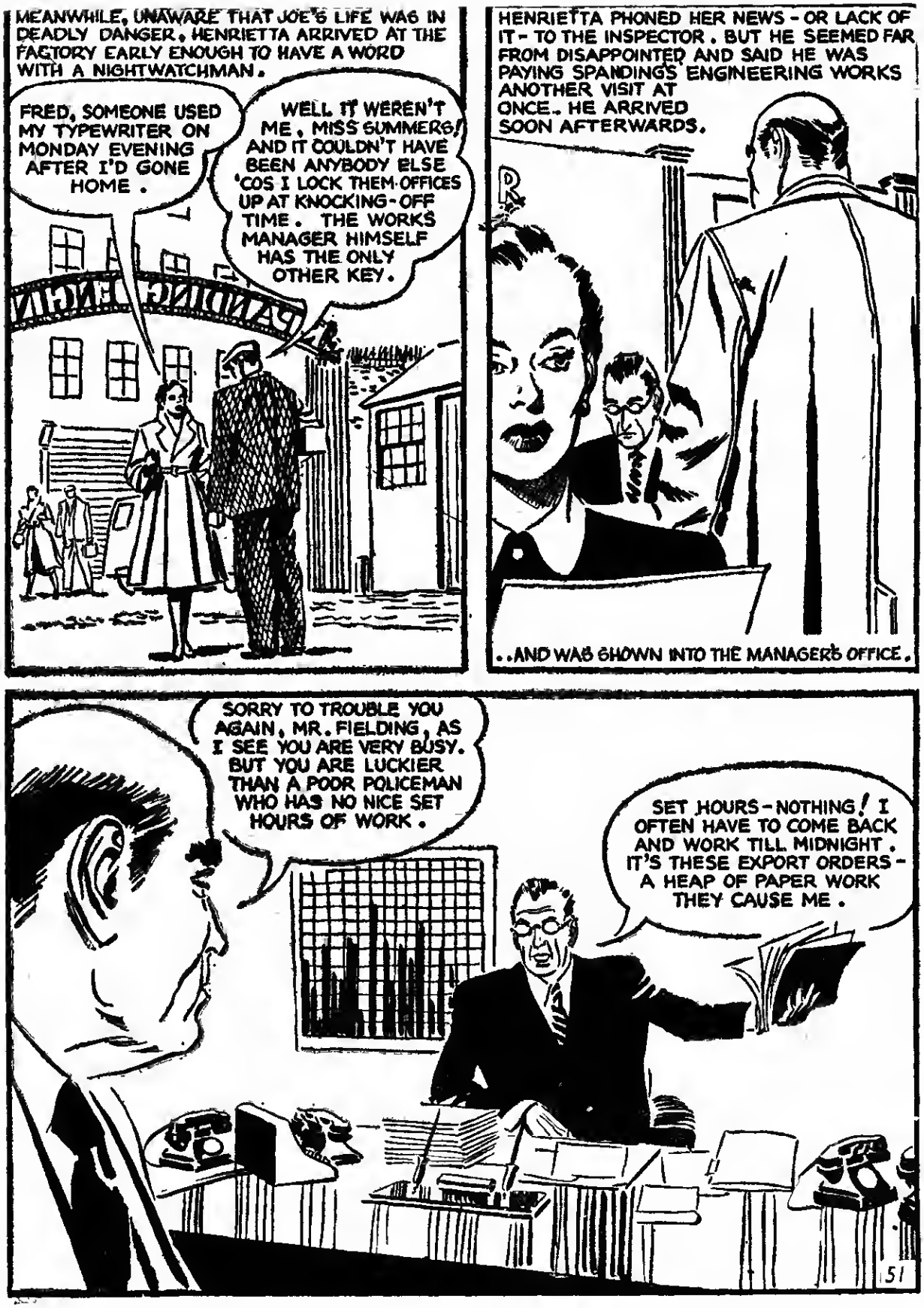

GLOYTZ WAS CUNNING. HE HAD PREPARED FOR SUCH AN EVENT; HE NOW INSERTED A BOOK~ "CRIME DOESN'T PAY" IN HIS SHOP WINDOW. THIS INDICATED TO HIS MORE DOUBTFUL CLIENTELE THAT HE WAS BEING WATCHED, AND THEY WERE TO KEEP AWAY. CROOK THOUGH HE WAS, GLOYTZ UNDOUBTEDLY HAD A SENSE OF HUMOUR. . . THAT NIGHT TWO MEN VISITED HIM. THEY CAME FROM THE RIVER, FOR HIS PREMISES BACKED ONTO THE THAMES. .

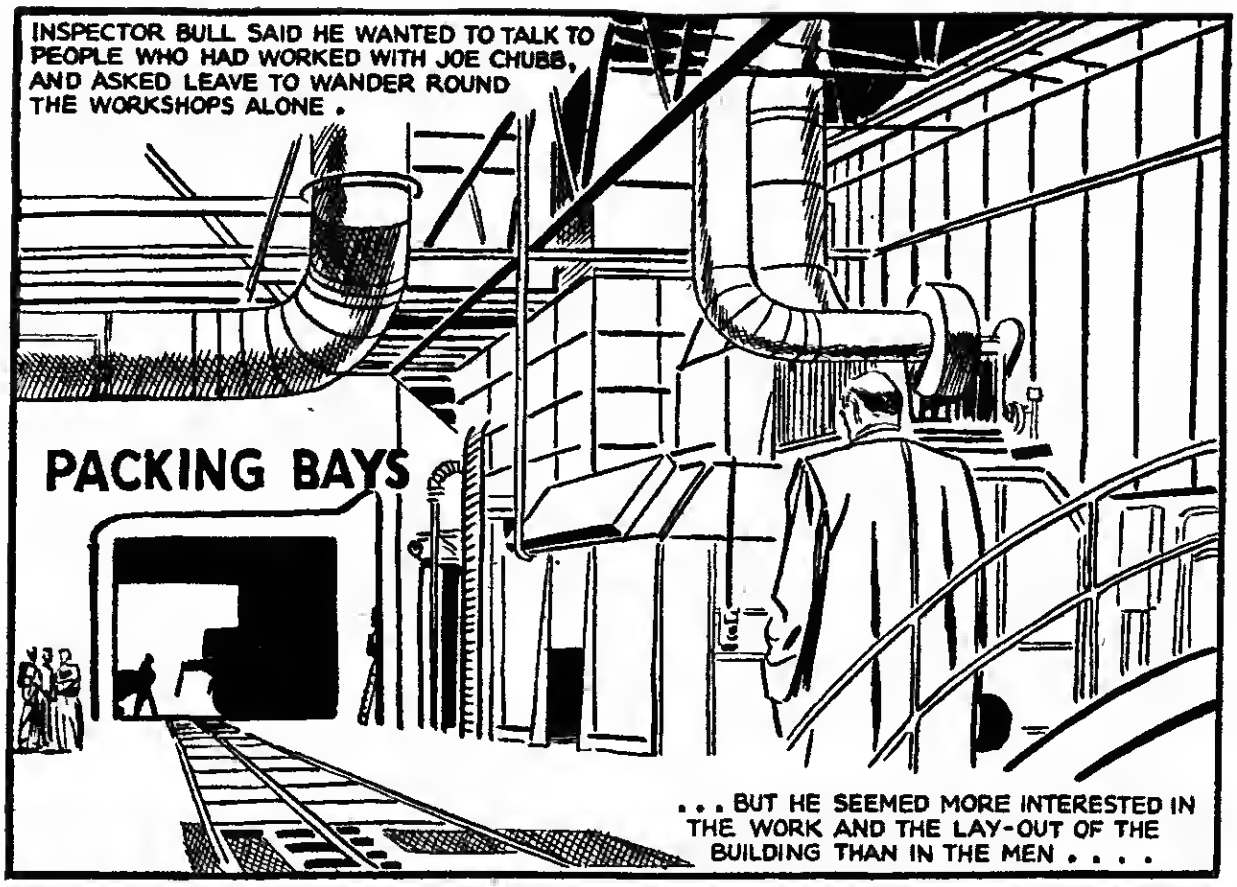
IT WAS NOW IMPERATIVE THAT GLOYTZ AND THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GANG SHOULD MAKE FURTHER PLANS. IT WAS HIGH TIDE NOW AND BUT A STEP DOWN FROM A LOWER WINDOW TO THE WAITING BOAT.

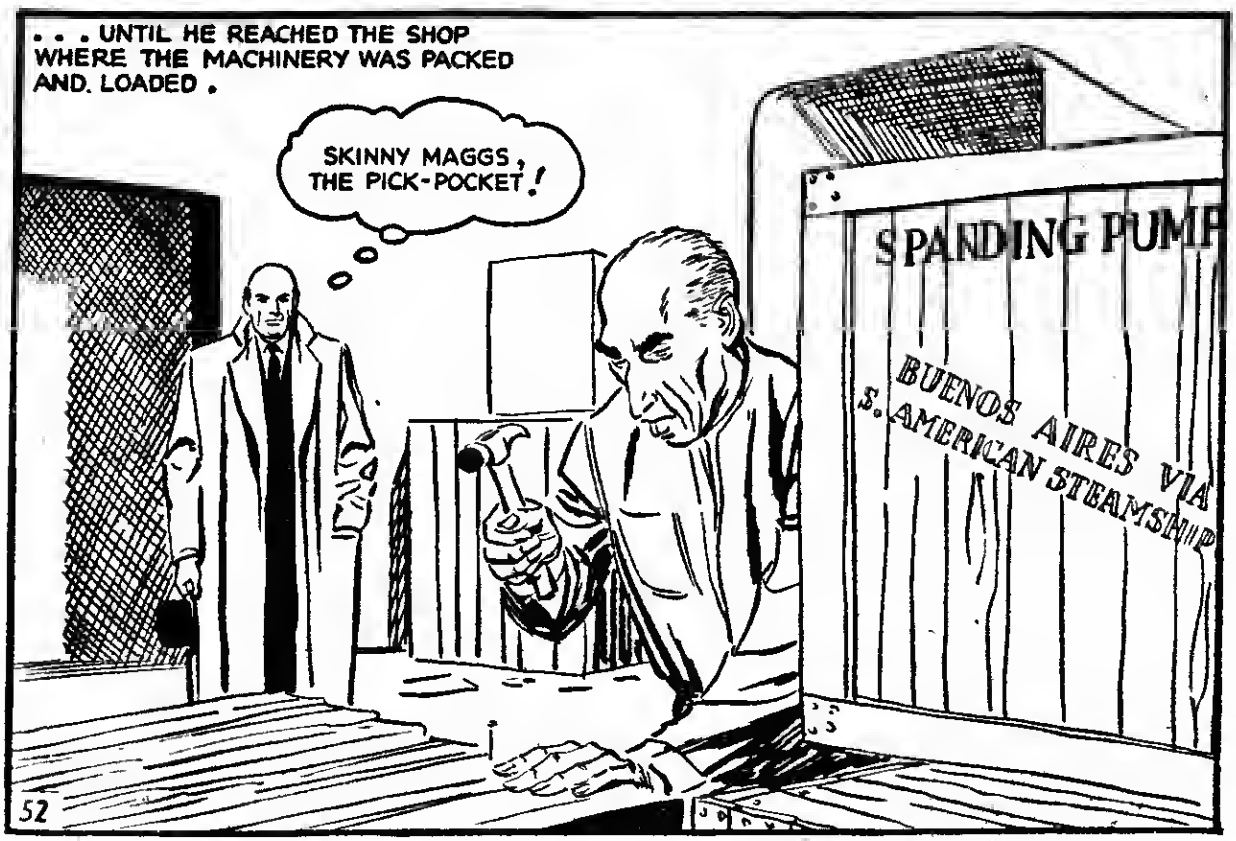
THE BOAT MOVED OFF SILENTLY THROUGH THE DARKNESS. PRESENTLY GLOYTZ JOINED THE GANG IN THE BACK ROOM OF A WATERSIDE INN. BUT THOUGH THE PAWNBROKER HAD A SENSE OF HUMOUR HE WAS A VERY FRIGHTENED MAN AS HE FACED THE MAN KNOWN AS ~ THE BIG SHOT!
AGAINST MY BETTER JUDGEMENT, WE TRUSTED MELTON. NOW WE'RE ON A SPOT!
PHOOEY! WE'VE GOT THE STUFF, HAVEN'T WE? AND IT'S ON ITS WAY, AS SAFE AS A BANK!
WITH JOE CHUBB DROWNED, THEY'VE NOTHING ON US.

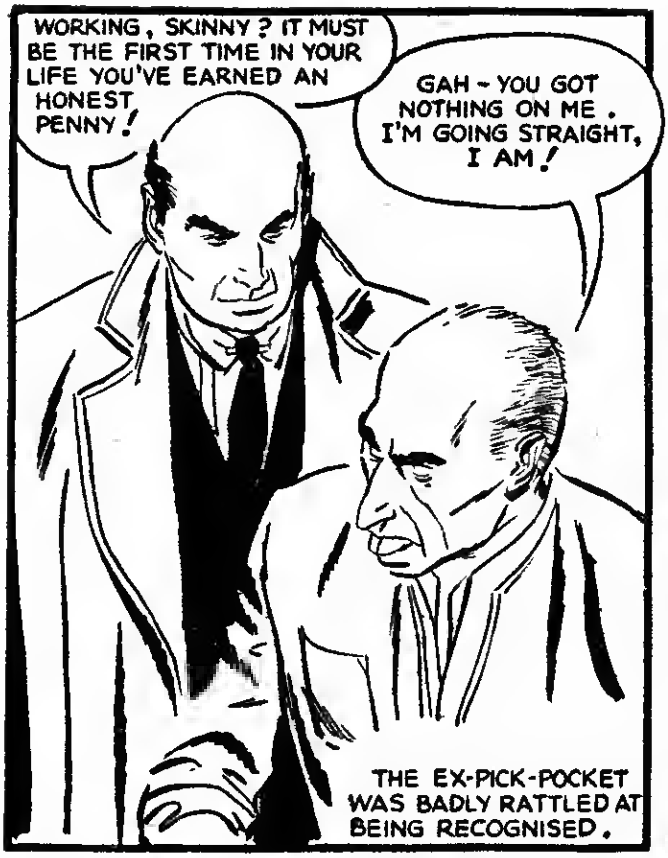
GLOYTZ TURNED WITH A SNARL.
IF HE WAS DROWNED! BUT THAT MAN COULD SWIM LIKE A FISH. I BELIEVE HE GOT AWAY ABOARD THE ATULA. HE THINKS HE KILLED MELTON, AND MAYBE HE'LL TRY TO HIDE. BUT WE DAREN'T RISK HIS BEING CAUGHT! HE KNOWS ENOUGH TO PUT A ROPE ROUND ALL OUR NECKS!

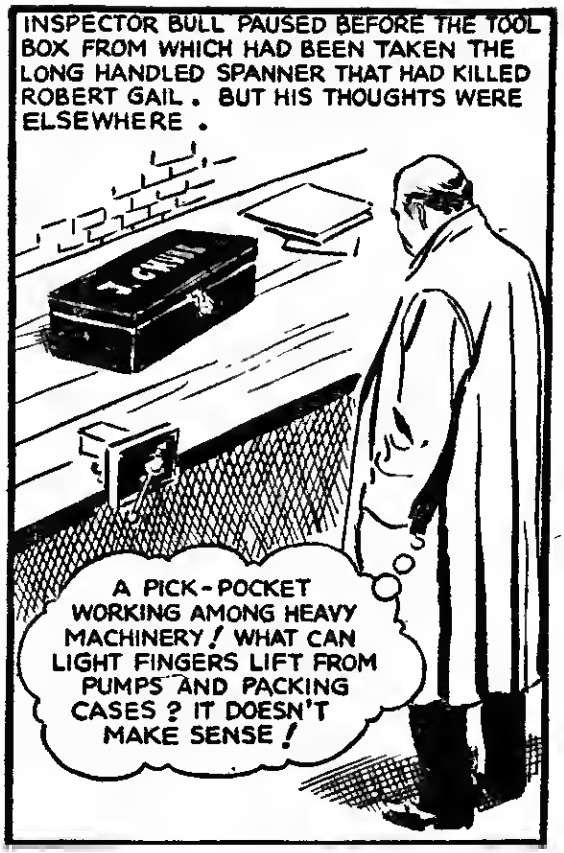
THE BIG SHOT'S CHAIR WENT OVER WITH A CRASH. HIS DARK EYES WERE NARROWED TO SLITS, AND HE GLARED AT THE WATCHING MEN.
BY HECK, HE'S RIGHT! YOU'VE GOT TO GET THAT SUCKER, AND NO MORE BUNGLING. YOU'VE GOT TO MEET THE ATULA WHEN SHE DOCKS AT HILLSWICH.
OKAY - OKAY. HE'LL GET HIS BEFORE THE COPS CAN MAKE HIM TALK.
SOMEONE LAUGHED SOFTLY. THEN THEY HUDDLED MORE CLOSELY ABOUT THE TABLE AND BEGAN TO MAKE FRESH PLANS - TO ENSURE THAT JOE DID NOT LIVE!

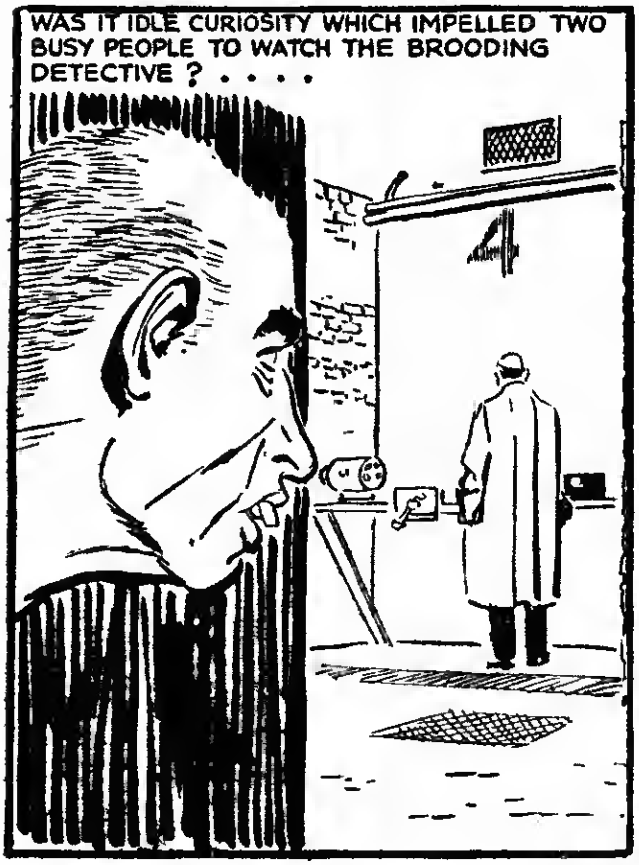

MEANWHILE, UNAWARE THAT JOE'S LIFE WAS IN DEADLY DANGER, HENRIETTA ARRIVED AT THE FACTORY EARLY ENOUGH TO HAVE A WORD WITH A NIGHTWATCHMAN.
FRED, SOMEONE USED MY TYPEWRITER ON MONDAY EVENING AFTER I'D GONE HOME.
WELL IT WEREN'T ME, MISS SUMMERS! AND IT COULDN'T HAVE BEEN ANYBODY ELSE 'COS I LOCK THEM OFFICES UP AT KNOCKING-OFF TIME. THE WORKS MANAGER HIMSELF HAS THE ONLY OTHER KEY.
HENRIETTA PHONED HER NEWS - OR LACK OF IT - TO THE INSPECTOR. BUT HE SEEMED FAR FROM DISAPPOINTED AND SAID HE WAS PAYING SPANDINGS' ENGINEERING WORKS ANOTHER VISIT AT ONCE. HE ARRIVED SOON AFTERWARDS.
..AND WAS SHOWN INTO THE MANAGER'S OFFICE.
SORRY TO TROUBLE YOU AGAIN, MR. FIELDING, AS I SEE YOU ARE VERY BUSY. BUT YOU ARE LUCKIER THAN A POOR POLICEMAN WHO HAS NO NICE SET HOURS OF WORK.
SET HOURS - NOTHING! I OFTEN HAVE TO COME BACK AND WORK TILL MIDNIGHT. IT'S THESE EXPORT ORDERS - A HEAP OF PAPER WORK THEY CAUSE ME.


INSPECTOR BULL SAID HE WANTED TO TALK TO PEOPLE WHO HAD WORKED WITH JOE CHUBB, AND ASKED LEAVE TO WANDER ROUND THE WORKSHOPS ALONE .
PACKING BAYS
. . . BUT HE SEEMED MORE INTERESTED IN THE WORK AND THE LAY-OUT OF THE BUILDING THAN IN THE MEN . . . .


. . . UNTIL HE REACHED THE SHOP WHERE THE MACHINERY WAS PACKED AND. LOADED .
SKINNY MAGGS, THE PICK-POCKET!
SPANDING PUMP
BUENOS AIRES VIA S. AMERICAN STEAMSHIP

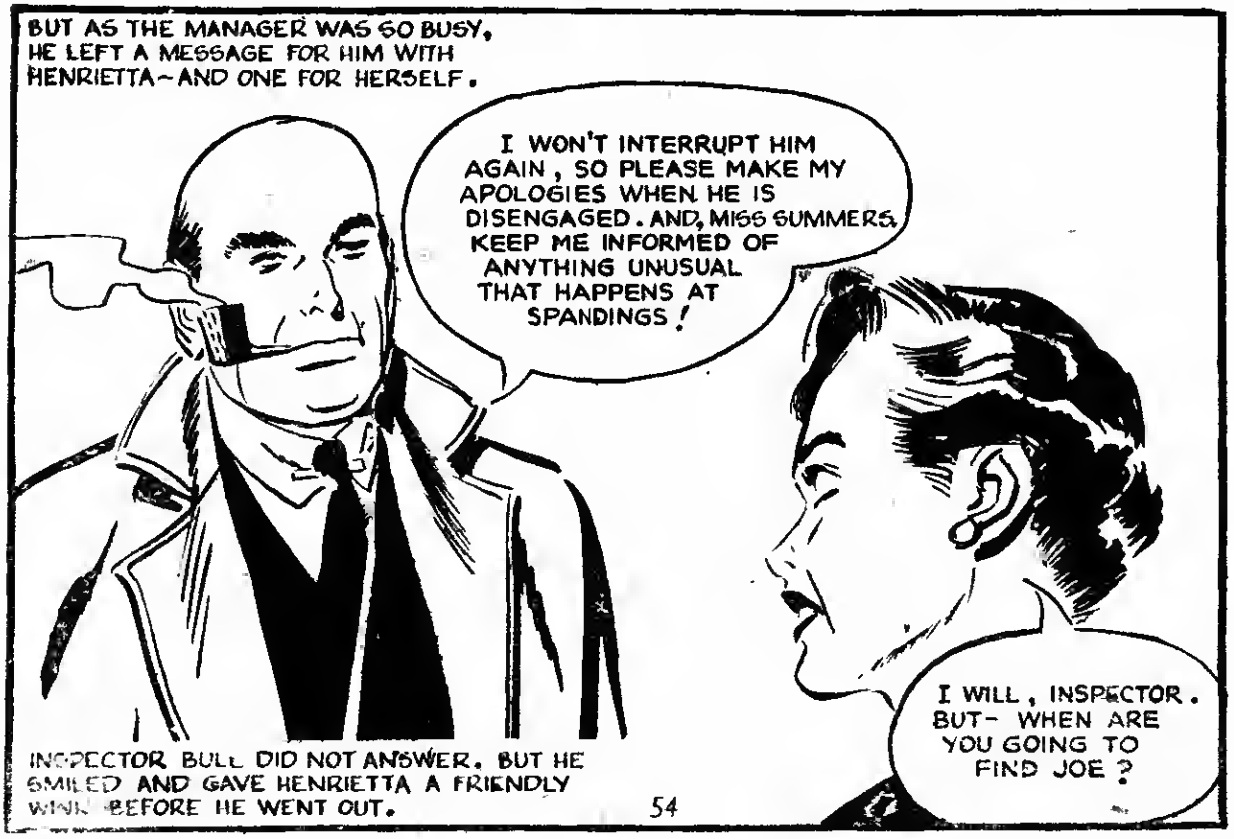

WORKING, SKINNY? IT MUST BE THE FIRST TIME IN YOUR LIFE YOU'VE EARNED AN HONEST PENNY!
GAH - YOU GOT NOTHING ON ME. I'M GOING STRAIGHT, I AM!
THE EX-PICK-POCKET WAS BADLY RATTLED AT BEING RECOGNISED.

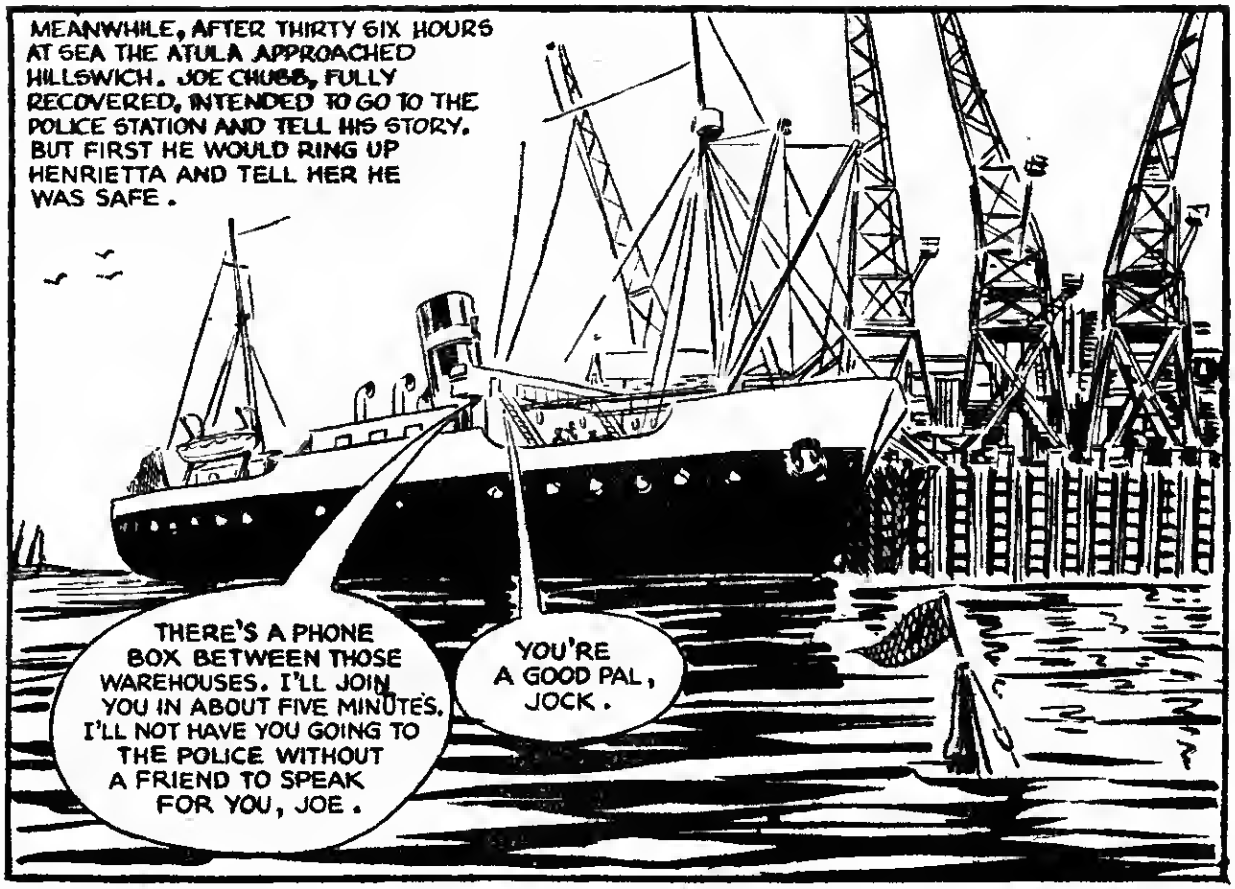

INSPECTOR BULL PAUSED BEFORE THE TOOL BOX FROM WHICH HAD BEEN TAKEN THE LONG HANDLED SPANNER THAT HAD KILLED ROBERT GAIL. BUT HIS THOUGHTS WERE ELSEWHERE.
A PICK-POCKET WORKING AMONG HEAVY MACHINERY! WHAT CAN LIGHT FINGERS LIFT FROM PUMPS AND PACKING CASES? IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE!


WAS IT IDLE CURIOSITY WHICH IMPELLED TWO BUSY PEOPLE TO WATCH THE BROODING DETECTIVE? . . . .
4

. . . OR FEAR?

STILL PONDERING THE SKINNY MAGGS RIDDLE, BULL RETURNED TO THE OFFICE.
LIGHT FINGERS - HEAVY MACHINERY FOR EXPORT TO AMERICA. BY HEAVENS, I'VE GOT IT!
WORKS MANAGER


BUT AS THE MANAGER WAS SO BUSY, HE LEFT A MESSAGE FOR HIM WITH HENRIETTA - AND ONE FOR HERSELF.
I WON'T INTERRUPT HIM AGAIN, SO PLEASE MAKE MY APOLOGIES WHEN HE IS DISENGAGED. AND, MISS SUMMERS, KEEP ME INFORMED OF ANYTHING UNUSUAL THAT HAPPENS AT SPANDINGS!
I WILL, INSPECTOR. BUT - WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO FIND JOE?
INSPECTOR BULL DID NOT ANSWER. BUT HE SMILED AND GAVE HENRIETTA A FRIENDLY WINK BEFORE HE WENT OUT.


MEANWHILE, AFTER THIRTY SIX HOURS AT SEA THE ATULA APPROACHED HILLSWICH. JOE CHUBB, FULLY RECOVERED, INTENDED TO GO TO THE POLICE STATION AND TELL HIS STORY. BUT FIRST HE WOULD RING UP HENRIETTA AND TELL HER HE WAS SAFE.
THERE'S A PHONE BOX BETWEEN THOSE WAREHOUSES. I'LL JOIN YOU IN ABOUT FIVE MINUTES. I'LL NOT HAVE YOU GOING TO THE POLICE WITHOUT A FRIEND TO SPEAK FOR YOU, JOE.
YOU'RE A GOOD PAL, JOCK.

JOE SLIPPED ASHORE AND INTO THE TELEPHONE BOX ON THE QUAYSIDE, BUT NO SOONER HAD HE LIFTED THE TELEPHONE. .
THE RIVERHITHE GANG!
55

JOE DID NOT WAIT TO BE ATTACKED . . .
OCH - JOE'S IN TROUBLE AGAIN!

AND JOE WAS NOT ALONE, WHEN, EYES BLAZING, HE LAUNCHED HIMSELF AT THE TWO CROOKS. JOCK WAS THERE, TOO, AND HE WAS ALWAYS SPOILING FOR A GOOD FIGHT!

REALISING THEY HAD BITTEN OFF MORE THAN THEY COULD CHEW, THE TWO THUGS SCRAMBLED TO THEIR FEET AND PREPARED TO BEAT A HASTY RETREAT.
OH, NO YOU DON'T! WE WANT A FEW WORDS WITH YOU.

JOE WAS CONVINCED THAT THESE WERE NOT TWO ORDINARY DOCKSIDE RATS WHO HAD ATTACKED HIM FOR HIS WALLET, BUT MEMBERS OF THE RIVER THE GANG WHO HAD FRAMED HIM. ALTHOUGH ONE OF THE CROOKS SUCCEEDED IN GETTING AWAY, JOE PINNED THE OTHER AGAINST THE WALL.
LEMME GO . . . I'LL TELL YOU SOMETHING. YOUR GIRL - THE BIG SHOT'S GOT HER!
YON'S A BETTER RUNNER THAN I AM!

JOE'S CAPTIVE NOW RISKED EVERYTHING FOR A CHANCE TO ESCAPE, AND A MIXTURE OF TRUTH AND LIES CONVINCED JOE OF HENRIETTA'S DANGER.

HENRIETTA! - WHERE IS SHE? WHO IS THE CHIEF?

IT'S - IT'S FIELDING, THE WORK'S MANAGER. I SWEAR IT! HE FAKED GAIL'S LETTER ON YOUR GIRL'S TYPEWRITER AND PLANTED YOUR SPANNER BESIDE GAIL'S BODY, AND NOW HE'S GOT HER BECAUSE SHE KNOWS TOO MUCH. WHEN THE TIDE'S UP TONIGHT, SHE'LL GO THE WAY MELTON DID!

I WOULDNA BELIEVE A WORD OF IT!

JOE CLENCHED HIS FISTS. .

BY HEAVENS - IF YOU'RE LYING - -

BE OFF WITH YOU AND CHECK HIS STORY, JOE. I'LL KEEP THIS RAT ABOARD THE ATULA UNTIL YOU GET BACK. AND WOE BETIDE HIM IF ANYTHING'S HAPPENED TO YOUR WEE LASSIE!

BUT HENRIETTA, FAR FROM BEING IN DANGER, WAS AT THAT MOMENT AT WORK AS THOUGH NOTHING HAD EVER HAPPENED TO DISTURB THE ORDINARY ROUTINE OF HER OFFICE LIFE.

WILL YOU DO THESE LETTERS BEFORE YOU LEAVE TONIGHT, MISS? MR FIELDING'S GOING AWAY ON BUSINESS FIRST THING IN THE MORNING. HE WANTS TO SIGN THEM BEFORE HE LEAVES.

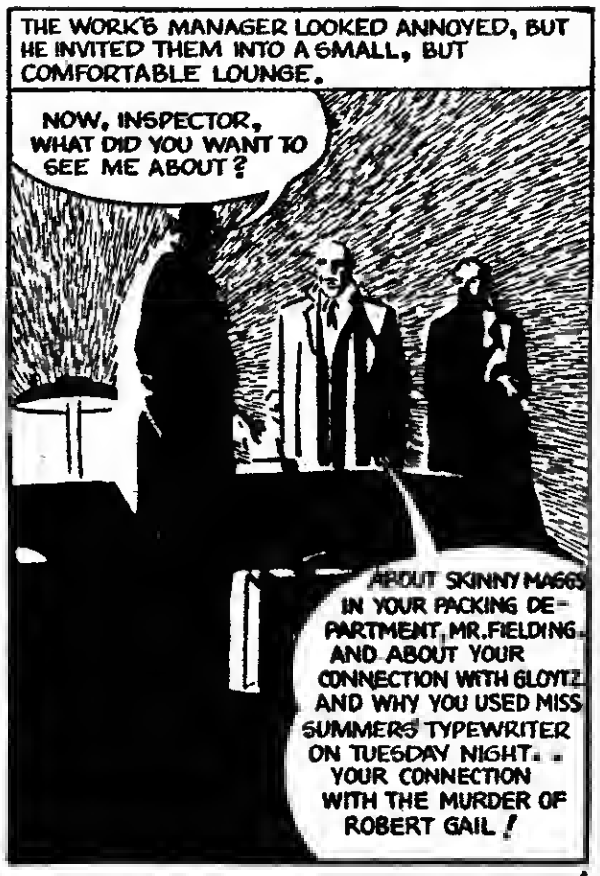
CONSEQUENTLY SHE WAS LATE GETTING OFF, AND IT WAS DARK WHEN SHE WENT TO SEE INSPECTOR BULL. SHE MET HIM AS HE WAS LEAVING POLICE HEADQUARTERS.
I'D GIVEN YOU UP, MISS SUMMERS. ANYTHING TO TELL ME?
POLICE
I HAD TO WORK OVERTIME. MR. FIELDING HAS TO GO AWAY UNEXPECTEDLY. OTHERWISE EVERYTHING'S AS USUAL . . .
THE INSPECTOR'S REACTION TO THIS NEWS SURPRISED HENRIETTA.
FIELDING GOING AWAY? - THAT'S SOMETHING I HADN'T FORESEEN. WE'LL CHECK UP ON HIM AT ONCE. TAXI!
?
FIELDING - SPANDING'S GO-AHEAD WORKS MANAGER -ALIAS "THE BIG SHOT"-HAD WAITED IN VAIN FOR A MESSAGE FROM HILLSWICH TO TELL HIM THAT JOE CHUBB HAD BEEN LIQUIDATED. HIS LONDON APPOINTMENT WAS A BLIND - IT WAS TIME FOR HIM TO GET OVERSEAS WHERE HIS CLEVER SMUGGLING RACKET HAD AMASSED A FORTUNE.
TAXI RANK? I WANT A CAB TO TAKE ME TO THE AIRPORT TO CATCH THE NIGHT PLANE . . .

INSPECTOR BULL TOOK THE PRECAUTION OF DISMISSING HIS CAB AND WALKING TO FIELDING'S HOUSE FROM THE END OF THE ROAD - SO AS NOT TO AROUSE INTEREST IN HIS ARRIVAL.
NICE LOOKING HOUSE YOUR WORKS MANAGER LIVES IN.
HE CAN AFFORD IT. HE DRAWS A HIGH SALARY, AND HE'S A BACHELOR. BUT SURELY YOU DON'T SUSPECT MR. FIELDING, INSPECTOR?

THE TAXI FIELDING HAD ORDERED, ARRIVED JUST AS BULL WAS ABOUT TO RING THE BELL. THE DRIVER MISTOOK HIM FOR THE OWNER OF THE HOUSE . . .
YOUR CAB FOR THE AIRPORT, SIR. WANT A HAND WITH THE LUGGAGE?
AIRPORT?

BULL THOUGHT QUICKLY - AND SENT THE TAXI AWAY..
I'VE HAD TO POSTPONE MY JOURNEY. TAKE THIS FOR YOUR TROUBLE.
THANK YOU, SIR.

AS BULL RETURNED TO THE FRONT DOOR, IT OPENED TO REVEAL FIELDING.
WHY, INSPECTOR BULL . . MISS SUMMERS! THIS IS A SURPRISE. I WAS EXPECTING A TAXI . . TO TAKE ME TO THE STATION.
THERE IS NO LONDON TRAIN FOR ANOTHER HOUR; TIME ENOUGH FOR A FEW QUESTIONS, MR. FIELDING. MAY WE COME IN?


THE WORK'S MANAGER LOOKED ANNOYED, BUT HE INVITED THEM INTO A SMALL, BUT COMFORTABLE LOUNGE.
NOW, INSPECTOR, WHAT DID YOU WANT TO SEE ME ABOUT?
ABOUT SKINNY MAGGS IN YOUR PACKING DEPARTMENT, MR. FIELDING. AND ABOUT YOUR CONNECTION WITH GLOYTZ AND WHY YOU USED MISS SUMMERS' TYPEWRITER ON TUESDAY NIGHT. . YOUR CONNECTION WITH THE MURDER OF ROBERT GAIL!

IT WAS SHEER BLUFF, BASED ON THE TAXI-DRIVER'S AIRPORT CLUE - BUT IT WORKED! FIELDING'S FACE TWISTED INTO A MASK OF HATE. WITH A SNARL HE SNATCHED OUT AN AUTOMATIC. .
STAY WHERE YOU ARE, BOTH OF YOU! ANOTHER FIVE MINUTES AND I'D HAVE BEEN AWAY - AND YOU COULD HAVE GONE ON LIVING. BUT NOW - -

FIELDING'S FINGER TIGHTENED ROUND THE TRIGGER. HIS EYES WERE GLITTERING AND HIS VOICE SANK TO A LOW WHISPER.
I'LL ADMIT YOU'VE BEEN CLEVER, BULL - BUT NOT CLEVER ENOUGH. NOW IT'S GOING TO COST YOU YOUR LIFE. GOODBYE, MISTER CLEVER BULL. . .
- - AND HIS HOOKED FINGER BEGAN TO SQUEEZE THE TRIGGER. . .

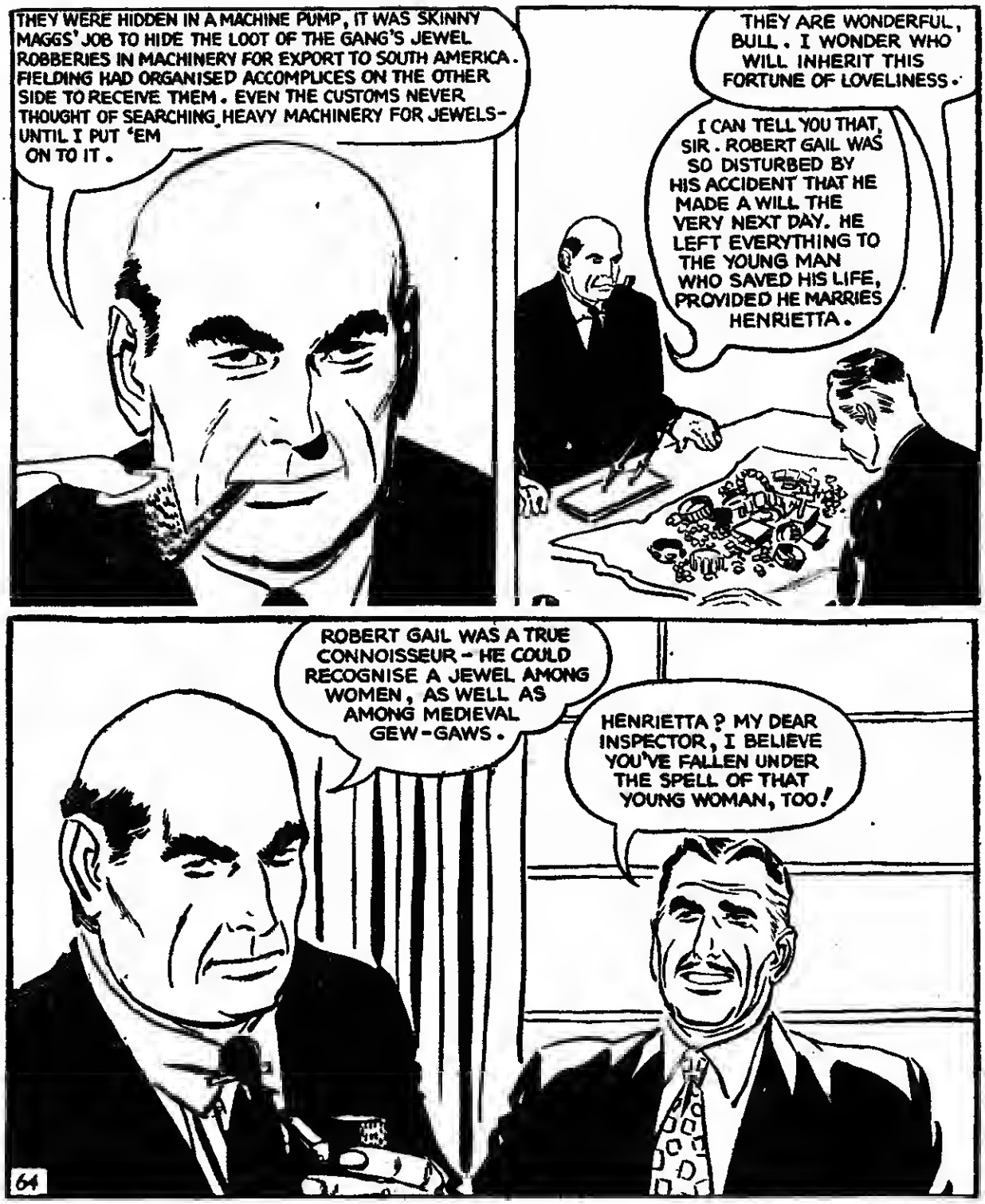
ONE MOMENT THERE WAS A DEATHLY SILENCE - THE NEXT, UPROAR! SUDDENLY THE FRENCH WINDOW CRASHED IN.. FIELDING'S BLAZING EYES DARTED SIDEWAYS..AND IN THAT SPLIT SECOND INSPECTOR BULL SPRANG...
JOE!
THE GUN ROARED..A BULLET BIT INTO THE CEILING..AND THEN FIELDING CRASHED OVER BACKWARDS WITH INSPECTOR BULL ON TOP OF HIM. A HARD RIGHT FLOORED THE MANAGER AND WHEN BULL ROSE TO HIS FEET HENRIETTA WAS ALREADY DIALLING 999...

SO YOU'RE JOE CHUBB - I'M GLAD TO MEET YOU. THIS BEAUTY WOULD HAVE PLUGGED ME IF YOU HAD NOT BARGED IN JUST THEN!

HENRIETTA'S CALL HAD BROUGHT THE INSPECTOR'S SQUAD AND FIELDING WAS FORMALLY CHARGED.
I'M ARRESTING YOU, FIELDING, FOR COMPLICITY IN THE MURDERS OF ROBERT GAIL AND GARRY MELTON -
BUT I KILLED MELTON! I KNOCKED HIM DOWN IN A FIGHT!

THE POST MORTEM SHOWED THAT MELTON DIED FROM DROWNING. WHILST UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF DRUGS. WE BELIEVE HE WAS THROWN IN THE RIVER AFTER YOU KNOCKED HIM OUT WE'VE NOTHING ON YOU AT ALL, MR CHUBB!
THEN I'M FREE HENRIETTA!

NEXT MORNING, AT SCOTLAND YARD, INSPECTOR BULL REPORTED TO THE COMMISSIONER.
THE GAIL JOB IS WOUND UP, SIR. WE'VE MADE THREE ARRESTS - FIELDING, GLOYTZ, AND SKINNY MAGGS. WE EXPECT TO PICK UP THE OTHERS NOW WE'VE JOE CHUBB'S DESCRIPTIONS.
THAT'S EXCELLENT WORK, INSPECTOR. BUT THE GAIL COLLECTION. DON'T TELL ME THAT THOSE HISTORIC JEWELS ARE LOST!



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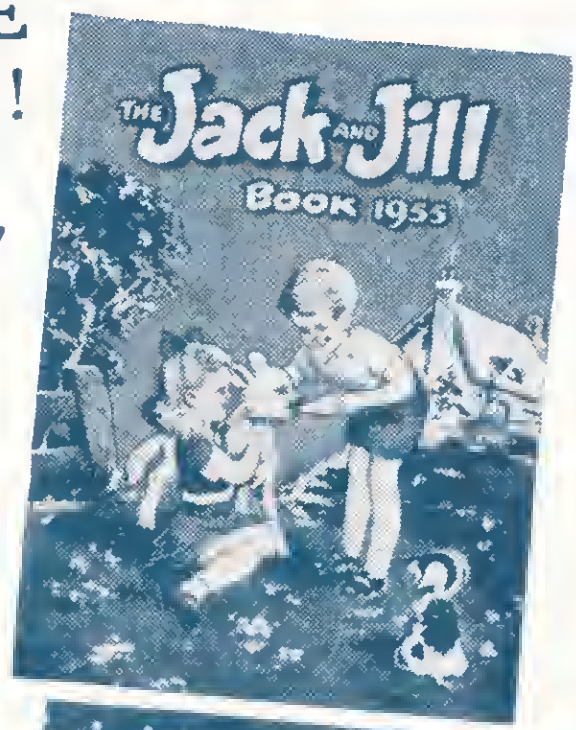

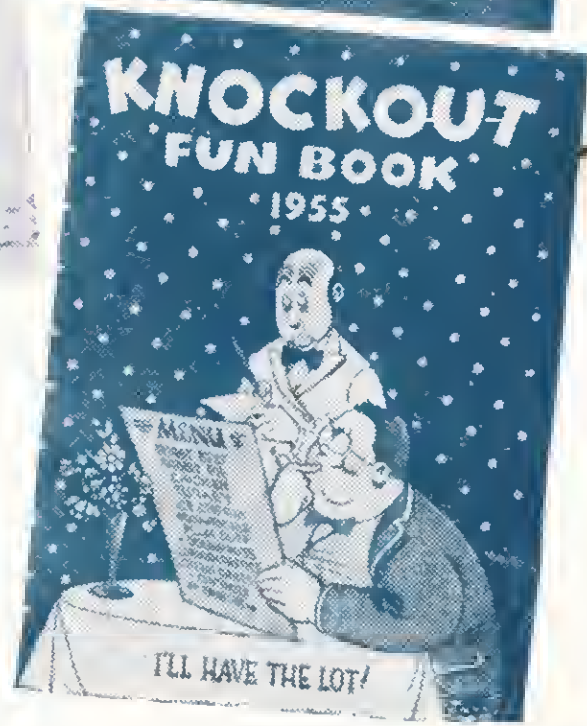

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